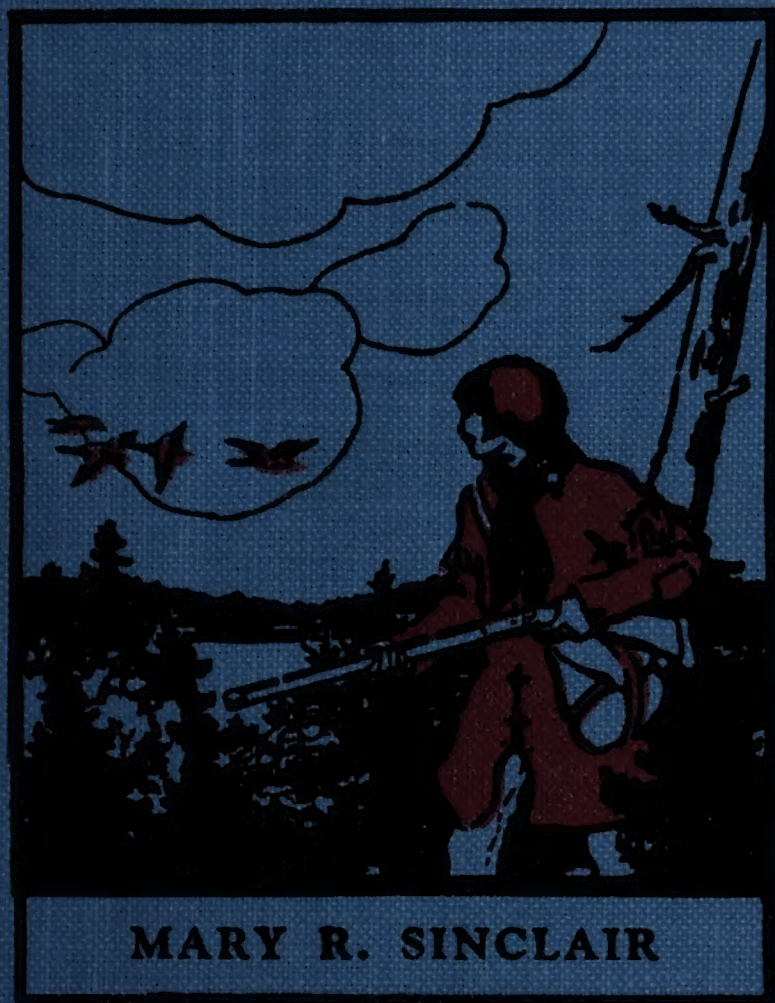


CHILDREN OF THE PIONEERS



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CHILDREN OF THE PIONEERS



WILD GEESE

CHILDREN OF THE PIONEERS

BY
MARY R. SINCLAIR



B. C. CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL

Education Department

PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS,

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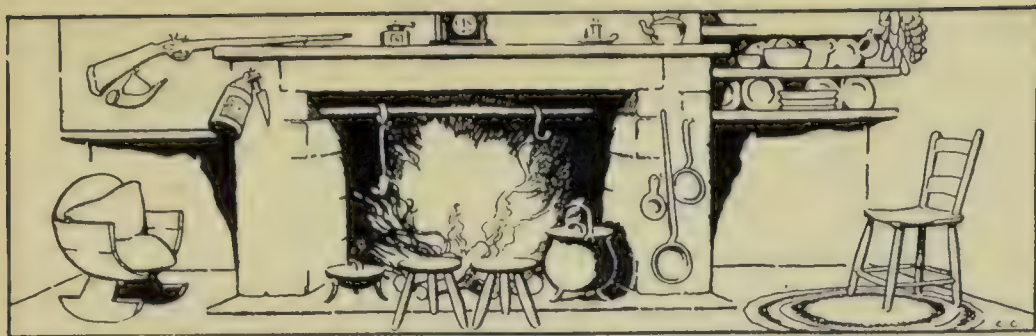
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I. THE BEGINNING

IN this book, you are going to meet and make friends with Pat and Betsy, the two little children that ended up the big Morgan family. The Morgan family went like this: Father, Mother, Harry, Mary, John, Dora, Pat and Betsy. Pat and Betsy were much younger than the others, Pat being just nine and Betsy only seven, so they were always called the children.

Pat and Betsy lived long ago, when our country of Canada was just in the making. The brave men and women who built up our country of Canada were called the pioneers and that is why Pat and Betsy were called the children of the pioneers. They lived on a rough little farm near a blue lake. Big trees grew behind the farm and it was from these trees that father made their home. Their house was made of logs fitted together, with the chinks stuffed with clay. It had two rooms, with a loft upstairs where the boys slept.

A fire in a big stone fireplace at one end of the main room heated the house and cooked the meals. Two beds built along one side of the wall served as seats in the daytime and as beds at night. On the floor were a big bear-skin rug and some bright mats of woven rushes. The Indians, who were their friends, had taught mother how to make these gay mats.

Over the fireplace there was a big shelf, on which

stood the family clock. This clock had come all the way from England, across the sea, and the family were very proud of it.

On the shelves in one corner were the family dishes. There were some pretty blue ones of which mother was very proud, for they had come from across the sea like the clock. There were also some heavy white dishes that she had bought at the store in the village. Besides these, there were thick clay bowls and plates that father had bought from the Indians. The Indians had made these dishes out of clay and had baked them hard in their fires.

On one side of the fireplace hung father's gun and hunting knife. The big black iron kettles and long-handled pans hung on the other side.

Two low little stools that sat side by side in front of the fireplace belonged to Pat and Betsy. That was where they sat at night, in front of the cheery blaze. There was also a rather strange rocking-chair with the body part made out of an old barrel. That chair belonged to mother, for it had been made especially for her by father. It was lined with cushions stuffed with goose feathers, and mother said it was the finest chair in all the world.

The rest of the furniture was rather roughly constructed, for father and the boys had made it out of the big trees they had cut down in clearing the farm. However, it was strong and useful, so nobody minded how rough and hard it was.

But, we must not spend too much time telling you about the inside of their house, for we want you to meet and get to know Pat and Betsy and see how they live. Perhaps before you meet them, you would like

to know that Betsy has thick curly yellow hair and wide blue eyes. Those eyes of Betsy's seemed to be always asking questions, as you'll soon find out. Pat doesn't look in the least like Betsy, for he has dark hair and eyes and bright red cheeks. Pat is a very sturdy, independent little fellow.

And now you're going to meet them at breakfast.



2. AT BREAKFAST

THE Morgan family were always up very early in the morning. They simply had to get up early to get all the work done. Sometimes the moon still hung out pale and silvery when Pat and Betsy got up. Then it was very chilly and cold. Little shivers ran up and down their backs. They fumbled into their clothes, their fingers always doing the wrong thing first. At least, that was what Betsy and Pat thought on those cold and early mornings.

However, after father got the big fire started, it was not half so bad. To start the fire, father just raked off the top ashes and there underneath lay the live red coals. He then piled the kindling on top and added light wood. Soon all was crackling merrily. That big fire soon chased away the frost nips.

Next father hung the old porridge pot on the hook, for the Morgans all knew how good porridge is for breakfast. By this time, mother and the girls were up and dressed, starting to get breakfast. The boys had come down from their beds in the loft and had set off with father down to the barn.

Pat and Betsy, young as they were, had their work to do, just like the older ones. First they carried in loads of wood which they piled neatly beside the fireplace. It was really surprising how much wood that fire could eat up. Betsy used to think it was just like a huge red-mouthed giant, always growling for wood.

After the wood came the water. Pails of water had to be carried in to fill up the pots and kettles. Dora and Mary were now milking the cows, so Pat and Betsy helped mother to finish getting the breakfast.

They put down the porridge bowls and the horn spoons very carefully. They put the plates down, one at each place, and then a cup beside each plate. There was a big plate of crusty home-made bread and a little butter for the grown-ups. Ham sizzled in the long-handled frying pan, but that ham was just for the grown-ups too. Betsy and Pat used to dip their bread in the brown ham fat. They called it their "ham butter" and they loved it.

Now all were back again, Dora and Mary with big pails of foamy milk ready to be strained and set away, and the boys and father up from the barn. They washed their hands and faces in a basin on the bench outside the kitchen door. There was a great splashing of water and rubbing of rosy faces.

When they were all tidy and clean and sitting around the table, father took his place at the head of the table. Father always said a prayer before breakfast and gave thanks to God for His loving care and kindness. Then breakfast began.

Everybody started on porridge, which they ate with plenty of warm creamy milk. Each had a bowl except Pat and Betsy, who had to share one big blue bowl

between them, because dishes were often scarce in the olden days.

Betsy and Pat rather liked this sharing of the bowl. Before starting, they always drew a line across the top of the porridge, dividing it in half. And neither was ever, ever to cross that line!

Sometimes they pretended that they were two huge giants trying to see who could reach the great wall first. The great wall was the line, of course. The giant that reached the great wall first was the winner and he took the other giant for his slave. Betsy's poor giant was usually the slave, for she couldn't eat nearly as fast as Pat.

At other times, they played that each owned a country. A great white flood was sweeping over the country. And of course that flood was the milk. But, as if a flood wasn't quite enough to have at one time, the land was also vanishing! Two dreadful monsters used to scoop up great spoonfuls of the land. The poor people of that land didn't know what to do. They fled here and there in terror, getting themselves all wet, till Betsy's side thought of a good idea.

"My people have started walking on stilts," she said proudly. "They keep their feet dry in that way, and they don't really care the least bit about the old flood!"

Pat's side couldn't be beaten like that. "Oh yes," he said, "my people found their houses getting rather damp, so they have now built them on perches, right up in the air. They have rope ladders that they let down. Now they don't care how high the old flood comes!"

"All right then!" cried Betsy. "I'll just see about that. Look out! the flood's coming!" Betsy gobbled

her porridge in great mouthfuls and the milk rose higher and higher over the remaining bit of land.

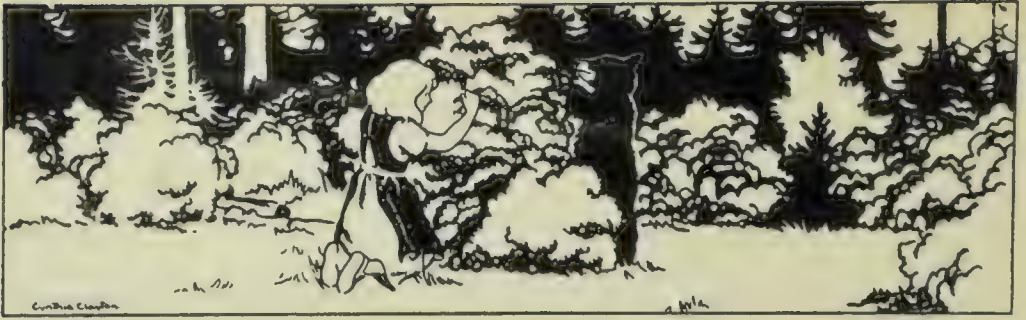
Pat looked worried for a moment, then he said, "My people are now going up to the mountains. They'll be safe there! The line is the mountains, Betsy."

"Oh no! The line was the mountains yesterday, Pat. It's the seashore to-day. They'll get drowned if they go there!"

Pat saw Betsy scooping up, nearer and nearer the line. Then Pat had a good idea. "Oh!" he cried; "my people are saved! A great kind eagle has just passed by and carried them safely away. So now I'm going to eat up all the rest of the land." And Pat finished up the porridge and ended the game for another day.

They were always sorry when the big blue bowl was scraped clean. It was such fun eating porridge. Then they had big cups of warm milk and bread fried in their "ham butter." The grown-ups had ham and eggs, with bread and butter. Sometimes there was hot Johnny cake. Mmm, how good that was with maple syrup!

After breakfast the day's work began in earnest. The grown-ups were busy all day long, and they usually kept Pat and Betsy quite busy helping them, running on errands and doing the little odd jobs. Both of them were always glad to cuddle around the fire at night and know that nobody would call out, "Come here, Betsy!" or "I want you, Pat!" Even the little children were hard workers in the days of the pioneers.



3. MAKING MAPLE SUGAR

EARLY in the year, when the rising sun warmed the earth, when the snows began to melt away and the grass peep green in the sunny hollows, the sap began to run through the maple trees again. And that meant it was maple sugar time!

Out came the wooden buckets and the old iron kettle. Up to the sugar bush behind the farm tramped the happy family. Betsy and Pat danced about for joy. Sugar time at last!

Father made a little cut on the sunny side of the rough tree trunks with his sharp knife. He made that cut through the rough outside bark down to where the clear sap was running. That cut in the tree came just about level with Pat's head. Then father pushed a little wooden spout into the cut. The maple sap dripped out of the cut and down the spout. Under the spout was hung a wooden bucket to catch the sap. And so the first tree was tapped.

John and Harry moved on to tap the next tree, but Pat and Betsy stayed watching the sap drip, drip, down into the bucket.

"Sap in the tree is just like our blood in us," said Pat, after staring a little while.

"Ugh!" said Betsy, with a little shiver. "I don't like to think that! Blood is so horrid and messy. That



MAKING MAPLE SUGAR

maple sap is lovely and clear and sweet! Mmm, aren't we going to have fun!"

"Yes, but we've got to work, too," said Pat. "Let's start gathering the wood now, so that we will have big piles ready before they start boiling."

Betsy left that dripping bucket rather slowly. She didn't want to gather wood, not in the least, but still, it seemed as if you couldn't have anything pleasant without working for it first. And she rather thought maple sugar was worth working for. So off she skipped to help Pat gather wood for the boiling.

John and Harry finished their tapping and then started to get the big fire ready. They cleared a place for it, scraped all the snow away and built up the wood. Then they drove two heavy sticks into the ground, one on each side of the fire. These sticks had notched ends and a green pole was placed across them.

They next filled the big old iron kettle with sap from the wooden buckets. Then they slung the kettle across the green pole right over the fire. The fire was now crackling merrily. The red flames licked hungrily around the bottom of the old black kettle, just as if they knew how good that maple sap was.

Often Harry stirred the sap with a big wooden paddle, so that it wouldn't burn. Sap burns just as easily as candy.

"It's thickening," he said after a while. "Yes, it's thickening into a fine syrup!"

"You'll have to start testing soon, won't you?" said Betsy.

You see, maple syrup has to be tested, just as candy has to be tested, to make sure that it isn't getting too

thick. And it was the testing of the maple syrup that Betsy and Pat loved most.

Harry took the big wooden paddle, dipped it into the foaming bubbling pot again, and poured some of the syrup right on the snow behind the fire. If the syrup were boiled enough, it would harden on the snow like golden toffee. And that was just what this syrup did. It hardened on the white snow like a lovely lump of butter toffee! How good it looked! Betsy and Pat could hardly wait for it to cool.

They watched it with round eager eyes. Soon Pat said, "I'll try it now, Betsy, and see if it's ready to eat. You might get burned."

"Oh no!" said Betsy. "I'll do my own trying. I don't think I'll get burned."

So Betsy and Pat both tried it and found it was just right to eat. Yum-yum! what good stuff that soft, sticky maple candy was! Pat, hardly able to speak, wished that every day was maple sugar time. Betsy agreed with a very syrupy smile. Who wouldn't?

John and Harry now poured off all the syrup that they wanted to keep. They let the rest boil till it became quite thick and sugary. They had to stir it very carefully to keep it from burning. Burning spoils the colour and the flavour of maple sugar, just as it spoils the candy that you make in your own kitchens.

When at last the sugar had formed, it was set aside to cool. Then the boys made it into cakes and balls, just as Mary patted the butter into cakes and pats. Betsy and Pat made round sugar balls of their own, and, of course, they were very proud of these round pudgy balls.

"I'm going to keep mine till next winter," said Betsy. "I'll keep it just as mother keeps the big cakes. Then I'll take it out at nights, by the fire, and nibble at it and enjoy myself. Wouldn't you like to do that, too, Pat?"

But Pat couldn't very well do that, for he had eaten half of his sugar ball already! Just in his usual gobbling way!



4. WHEN THE INDIANS DINED ON ROAST BEEF

THIS is a true story of an adventure with Indians that took place right on father's own farm. The Indians were the very Indians who lived up the lake, Big Bear's tribe. So you may be sure that this is a story that Betsy and Pat love.

Away back in the beginning, when father first came here, he built his log cabin. Then he had to begin to get the ground ready to grow things that they could eat. Potatoes and corn were always the first crops in those days, because they grew easily.

So father and the two boys, with some kind neighbours, started to clear a patch of land. Such heavy, tiring work as it was! All the trees had to come down to give sunshine and soil for the other plants. Father used the top part of the trees for making rough furniture, while the rest was used for firewood. They burned as much of the big stumps as they could. Then the yoke of oxen pulled the easier ones out and over to one side of the clearing.

But it is not of the stumps but of the oxen that pulled

them out that this story tells. These two animals were very patient, strong beasts, and did much hard work. After they had pulled away all the stumps that were willing to come, they dragged a small home-made harrow up and down the ground, between the remaining stumps and rocks. They did this work very well and father always felt very grateful to them.

However, there were some other persons who had different ideas about those cattle. The Indians were watching the doings of the white men with much curiosity. When they saw the cattle dragging the plough and pulling out stumps, they were amazed.

That night, in their own settlement up the lake, they talked a great deal about the strange sight. Why should cattle do such work when there were white squaws around? That was work for squaws, not for cattle. And they thought of a plan that would make the lazy white squaws do their own work, and let the cattle do theirs.

The next night, the Indians dressed themselves in their best furs and feathers, preparing for a big feast. They dined with much merriment and shouting on *roast beef*. At last the cattle were being put to their own use.

However, when father found out, the next morning, that one of his precious cattle was missing, he at once guessed what had happened. He questioned the Indians, who were still hanging around with curious eyes. He was very much surprised to find them answering him quite frankly, "Yes, we took the cow."

"But that cow was mine," said father. "I bought her in the village and paid a great deal of money for her."

At this, the Indian chief, Big Bear, laughed. "Yours?

How is one of nature's creatures yours? Did you make it? How then is it yours?"

Father again tried to patiently show them that the cow was his, and that the Indians had no right to touch it. But the Indians refused to see. Indeed, they were so bold as to say that they would soon set the other poor cow free, too. Then the white squaws would do their own work!

At that, father became very angry. He took out his shot gun and fired it into the air, just to show the Indians how dreadful these fire-shooting guns of the white man were. He said that the very next Indian who touched anything of his would get a taste of that fire-shooting where he didn't want it!

This, as you might imagine, made the Indians change their minds. They stopped their rude laughter, and went home together, soberly to think it over.

The next day, father was very much surprised to find them back again with three fine fox skins to make up for the cow they had stolen. They were sorry, they said; they had not understood the white man's ways.

"We ate cow so you keep skins," said the chief, Big Bear. "We not understand. We know now. So now we friends again, eh?"

Father smiled and nodded his head. The Indians smiled too—fine brown smiles that lit up their whole faces. For smiles show friendliness the whole world over!

Some time later, father sold those skins down at the village. As they were very fine skins indeed, the store man gave him just about the price of a young cow. So he wasn't so unlucky after all! Besides, he was still the best of friends with the Indians, and they had, for once in their lives, dined on the finest roast beef!



5. MAKING SOAP

ALTHOUGH the big general store down in the village sold soap, mother always made her own. You see, the soap in the store was quite expensive, and with a large family like hers, mother could never afford to buy her soap. So she used to make her own.

Soap-making took place outdoors one day in the early spring. It took lots of wood and water, so Pat and Betsy were kept busy that day. Harry helped mother with the heavy lifting, while John and father divided his work between them. Mary and Dora took care of the housework that day.

Soap making began with the gathering of the winter's ashes. Does that seem strange to you? All winter long, the wood ashes from the big fireplace had been kept for this very purpose. Harry had placed on a low bench, a big barrel with a hole in the bottom near the edge, and a thick layer of clean straw was spread inside. Pat and Betsy helped carry the buckets of grey wood ash over to the big barrel.

When that big barrel was full of these grey wood ashes, Harry poured water in. The water soaked down through the ashes, and down through the straw. It trickled out through the hole in the barrel to a bucket below. It was now a clear brown colour and was called lye.

With great interest, Pat and Betsy watched that brown lye trickle down. They had been warned by mother that they must never, never touch it. Lye was so strong that it would burn their hands and peel the skin right off. Mrs. Hawkins had upset a pail of lye last spring and burned her leg very badly. Yet lye helped to make soap, and soap never burned you. It just washed the dirt away. Yes, lye was strange and wonderful stuff.

After Harry had a big bucket of lye, he tested it to see if it was strong enough. Pat and Betsy thought this was very funny because all he did was to put an egg in the bucket. If the egg floated, the lye was strong enough. But if the egg wobbled and sank down, it was not strong enough. Then it had to be poured back to soak through the barrel of ashes again. This time the egg floated, and Harry looked very pleased.

"All right, mother!" he called. "The lye is ready! Now for the fire, youngsters! Let 's get started!"

So, once again, Pat and Betsy lugged up armfuls of wood. Harry built the fire in a cleared space down by the workshed. He thrust two notched sticks in the ground and a green one across them, just as for the maple sugar fire. Then he poured the lye into the old black kettle and hung the kettle over the fire.

Mother now came out carrying a big bag, in which she had all kinds of greasy scraps, such as candle-ends, bacon rind, stale fat, grease, and old bits of suet. She put these into the kettle of lye and then the soap making had started.

The kettle grew hot; the fats melted and thickened in with the lye. The little bits of bone, skin and

candle-wick that had been in with the scraps floated on top. Mother skimmed these off. She stirred the mixture carefully to keep it from boiling over.

"Mmm!" said Betsy, as she sniffed the air; "it 's beginning to smell just like soap-making!"

"That 's why mother makes soap outside, so that it won't smell up the whole house, isn't it, mother?"

Mother nodded her head as she kept on with her stirring. It was hard, hot work stirring that big kettle over the glowing fire. Mother's face grew very rosy and shiny. Pat and Betsy wished they could do it for her, but mother said they were too small to help. They just stood well back from the fire and tried not to ask too many questions. Mary had told them that when they did that, they were helping mother.

The mixture was now as thick as and almost as brown as molasses. Mother said it was ready. Then Pat and Betsy got the big stone jars for her and she dipped out pailfuls of the hot soap. When she finished, she had one big tubful and five stone jars of this home-made soap.

As it cooled, it began to look just like thick brown jelly. This kind of soap was called soft soap. Mother and the family liked their own soft soap far better than any soap they could buy at the store.

Though soap making was hard work, it did not cost anything and that was another important reason why they all liked their own home-made soap.



6. PAT GETS A NEW COAT

PAT'S red coat was getting too small for him in every way. It was much too short and much too tight. The cuffs had crept away up, almost to his elbows, and not one of the three brass buttons would meet. Yes, it certainly was time to get Pat a new coat.

Mother was worried for she didn't know how she was going to get that new coat for him. There was no new cloth to be had, and there were no old clothes that could be made over for him. She could not afford to buy cloth at the store in town, because that cloth had come all the way across the sea from England and cost a great deal of money. So what was she going to do?

Mother thought about that coat a great deal. When she was thumping the dash of the butter churn—up—down—she thought about it. When she was mixing her great bowl of bread mixture, she thought about it. When she was stirring the soup in the old black kettle, she thought about it. When she was knitting by the fireside at night, with her needles flashing like little silver swords through the heavy grey wool, she was busy thinking of it. And the more she thought about that new coat, the more worried she became. Just what was she going to do?

One chilly night, just about this time, Big Bear was

passing the farm on his way to the Indian settlement up the lake. Big Bear was tired, hungry and cold. He had been carrying a big pack on his back. The lights of the Morgans' farmhouse shone cheery and yellow, and Big Bear thought he would drop in and see his friends.

The Morgans were very surprised and delighted to see Big Bear. Father led him in to the sparkling fire. Big Bear sat down, cross-legged, on the rush mat; the firelight on his dark brown skin and the string of shell charms around his strong neck. From the other side of the fireplace, Betsy and Pat watched him with wide eyes. He was their friend, of course, but still, he was an Indian!

Mother gave Big Bear a bowl of hot soup from the black kettle that still hung over the fire, and a piece of fresh-baked bread. Big Bear smiled at her and grunted, "Thank!"

When he smiled his thanks, the light shone on his fine brown eyes and Betsy and Pat saw that he was kind and their friend, indeed. They felt much happier.

Betsy remembered his little brown baby that they had found in the woods that day. It was such a dear little baby! Then she remembered the gingerbread man that Dora had baked for her. He even had an apple-seed face and a row of apple-seed buttons down his middle! She had eaten one foot off, but she was sure that the Indian baby wouldn't mind that. So she got it out from its hiding place behind the blue platter, and shyly gave it to Big Bear for the "baby."

Big Bear looked at the one-legged gingerbread man and then at the flushed and happy Betsy who was

saying the word "baby" over and over. At last he understood. He smiled his thanks and tucked it carefully away in his pack.

Pat was now thinking very hard about what he could give, for he couldn't let Betsy beat him like that. He had eaten his gingerbread man because he had been hungry. He didn't believe in saving things like Betsy. But he simply couldn't think of anything else to give till he saw his little old red coat. The three brass buttons that wouldn't meet stretched down one side of that old red coat and they shone in the firelight like three little moons. At last he had it! A button off his coat! A big shiny brass button! Wouldn't the Indian baby love that!

Quick as a thought, he cut it off and pushed it in on top of Betsy's gingerbread man while Big Bear was grunting in half-words to father. He pushed it so hard that the big brass button made quite a mess of the poor one-legged gingerbread man's face. But he didn't know that. All he knew was that he felt very, very happy in thinking of how happy the little brown baby would be.

Big Bear soon rose to go. He pulled on his pack and set lightly off into the night. Pat wished he could be as brave as Big Bear, while Betsy shivered to think of him going through all the forest alone at night. It seemed as if nothing could frighten Big Bear!

The surprise came next morning. When father opened the door to go down to the barn, he found a fine creamy deerskin lying on the doorstep. It was a big skin, tanned beautifully soft and yellow. Only a patient Indian could tan a deerskin that way, and they were all sure that the Indian must have been Big

Bear's wife. Big Bear must have left the deerskin in return for their kindness to him.

Father said Big Bear was a gentleman, an Indian gentleman. Mother thought so too, and as she looked at that big soft skin, a happy look came over her face. "Pat!" she cried, "Pat! Here's your new coat! We'll make it of deerskin!"

Pat could hardly believe his good luck. He hung around all day watching mother make that coat. She cut it out carefully with her big shiny scissors. Then she got her needle and sewed the pieces together with strong leather thread. She cut a deep fringe around the bottom of the coat and the ends of the sleeves, just the way the Indians fringed their soft deerskin shirts. Then she lined it with the little old red coat. Pat's new coat began to look very fine indeed.

Dora stopped her work to come and see the new coat. When she saw it, she cried, "How beautiful! I wish I had a coat like that. Would you like to have some little red beads on the outside, like Big Bear has on his, Pat?"

"Oh yes, I'd like that! Have you some beads?"

Dora did have some. As soon as she had some spare time, she sewed them on, a bright pattern of red beads around the collar. She also sewed the two big brass buttons down one side. Those brass buttons would have to work again, keeping Pat's new coat shut. Whether those two brass buttons ever wondered where their brass brother went, I don't know.

Pat was very proud of his new coat when it was finished. It was nice and big all over with plenty of room to grow in. And besides being big and warm and weatherproof, it looked so fine! Pat thought he

must look just like Big Bear himself with all his fringes and red beads. But, of course, he didn't say that out loud. Betsy might not agree!

Betsy sat very quietly as she watched Pat parade up and down in his fine new coat. Then she said: "Mother, when you're not too busy, and when I grow too big for my blue coat, and when Big Bear leaves us another skin, will you please make me a new coat like Pat's? I'd like one very much indeed!"

Mother smiled as she put away her work-basket. "Yes, Betsy dear, I'll make you one, too, if you don't grow too soon. Deerskin lined with wool certainly makes a strong warm coat. It will wear well, too."

Mother was very pleased with Pat's new coat. And Betsy was very pleased with mother's answer. Already she could see herself strutting proudly up and down in a fine new deerskin coat with fringes and beads and all. She thought she would look just like Shining Eyes, Big Bear's sister. But, of course, she didn't say that out loud. Pat might not agree!





7. THE SKY BOAT

ONE sunny spring day, Betsy and Pat were sitting under the big pine tree by the lake shore. There was soft springy green moss under that big pine tree, so they stretched themselves out flat. My, it was a comfortable feeling!

Out in front danced the blue shimmering lake. Tiny blue waves made a lap-lap sound along the pebbly beach. Some wild ducks were diving and turning somersaults and having a splendid time among the reeds. Away across on the other side of the lake, was the clearing where the new road went.

When Pat saw that clearing, he grew quite cross-looking. "I wish that old road were ready," he grumbled. "I'm tired of waiting for that new road to be ready."

"It won't be long now, Pat," said Betsy, cheerily. "I heard father say that this very morning. It is almost finished."

But Pat still looked as cross as ever. "Huh, they're always saying that. They've been saying it for ever so long already. Say, by the time we get to the village, I'm sure the store will be sold out!"

Betsy's eyes opened wide at that. "Oh, do you think so, Pat?"

"It's sure to be! All the Indians went down long

ago with their furs in their canoes. You know how they buy everything they see. I don't see why we couldn't go down in canoes too. It would be good fun!"

"It would not, Patrick Morgan, and you know it, too!" said Betsy. "You know how far they have to carry the canoes and furs and things on their backs. They go a long way like that through the woods, with no roads, either. We would have lots of fun then, wouldn't we? You know how tired your legs get and how all the bushes and vines cut and scratch us. No, sir, I 'm waiting for the new road!"

Pat didn't say anything to this sensible speech of Betsy's. He just lay flat on his back with his hands behind his head, and gazed up at the blue sky above. It was such a blue, blue sky and so far up. Three little white clouds, all soft and fluffy, floated slowly across it. Those little clouds seemed to be having a good time up there. Then a flock of birds flew north against that blue sky. They looked like little black specks that soon were quite out of sight.

Pat gave a big sigh, as he said: "I wish we were birds. Then we could fly down to the store as quick as a cat winks!"

"Do you?" said Betsy. "Well, perhaps it would be nice flying in the air like that; but ugh! I'd hate to have to live on worms and slugs!"

Pat looked at Betsy and laughed. "No, I suppose you wouldn't be a sensible bird and eat what you should. I suppose you'd be the kind that eats our seeds and pecks the fruit."

"Oh no, I wouldn't!" said Betsy, quickly. "But anyway, I don't want to be a bird. It's you that wanted to be a bird and eat slugs."

"I didn't want to be a bird to eat slugs," said Pat. "It was to fly through the air that I wanted to be a bird. To fly like a sky boat! Betsy, wouldn't that be an idea? If we only had a sky boat to fly through the air!"

"A sky boat?" said Betsy, in great surprise. "Why, what do you mean?"

"Just what I said. A sky boat is a boat that flies through the air like birds do."

Pat's eyes were shining with excitement and he was happily kicking his legs up and down. But Betsy thought it was a rather silly idea. "Hmm, how would your boat stay up in the air? Only birds and insects stay up in the air. You're much too heavy to think of flying."

"I'm not going to try to," said Pat. "You know we tried flying off the pig-pen fence once. Do you remember how you skinned your knees when you fell? I've too much sense to try flying like that again. What I mean is to go sailing through the sky in a sky boat, just as we go over the water in a water boat."

"Yes, but how are you going to get your sky boat up in the air?" asked Betsy.

"Oh, it will have to have wings, like birds have. Big wings to flap in the air, the way birds do. Then I will go flapping through the sky in my sky boat."

"But how will you make the wings flap?" asked Betsy, full of questions as usual.

"Oh, don't bother me so. I haven't had time to think about that yet. Anyway, Harry told me that men first learned how to make water boats from the way ducks swam in the water, so why can't we learn how to make sky boats from the way birds fly in the air?"

"Then why not make some boats to go under the water like fish do?" said Betsy.

"Of course, we'll have that kind too, in case it is too windy in the air and too rough on top of the water. Then we'll just hop in our under-the-water boats!"

"Oh, that will be such fun!" cried Betsy, happy at last.

"Yes, it will be lots of fun, and useful too. Yes, sir, we'll have three kinds of boats, and then, in the morning, I'll say, 'Well, Betsy, how shall we travel to-day, in our sky boat, or in our water boat, or in our . . .'"

"Under-the-water boat?" finished Betsy. "Well, if I have my best dress on, I think I'll travel behind old Dobbin as I always have, because that way is absolutely safe."

"You wouldn't be scared of a sky boat, would you?" asked Pat.

"N—no, not really," said Betsy. "But when I've got my best dress on, I must be very careful, you know."

"Will you have your best dress on when we go down to the village?" asked Pat.

"Yes, of course, I must look my best then," said Betsy, proudly.

"Then I guess we'll have to travel in the wagon behind old Dobbin. Some other time, when you aren't all dressed up, we'll go down in our sky boat."

"Oh yes," said Betsy. "That will be delightful."

Then the children lay very still on the soft moss under the old pine tree. They were both busy with their own thoughts. Pat was proudly thinking of the wonderful sky boats he was going to make. Beautiful

sky boats that would go flapping through the sky! Perhaps he would make under-the-water boats, too. Oh my goodness, there was so much for him to do! He would be kept busy all his life with these wonderful boats. He smiled broadly, very pleased at the thought.

Betsy was smiling too. Why do you suppose she was smiling? Betsy was smiling because she was so glad she would be wearing her best dress when they went down to the village. Sky boats might be very thrilling and exciting and all that, but Betsy thought she would far sooner travel in the creaking wagon behind old Dobbin. Betsy believed in being safe!



8. THE TRIP TO TOWN

ONE warm spring night, when all the frogs down by the reedy lake shore were croaking to their hearts' delight, and the birds were crooning sleepy lullabies, Mr. Hawkins came riding over on his big black horse. He tied the horse to the gate post, where Betsy and Pat fed him handfuls of sweet grass. Pat thought he was a very wonderful horse, so big and black and strong, but Betsy thought his huge white teeth reminded her too much of the wolf in the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*. So most of the grass she picked she gave to Pat to feed the horse. You may be sure that Pat liked that plan.

Mr. Hawkins and father sat on the big chopping block by the woodshed. They lit their pipes and talked of many things, in the way men do. Betsy and Pat watched the way the soft grey smoke curled up and up, to melt away at last into the air. That smoke was fragrant too, just like the fires at clearing time, when they roasted potatoes in the red coals and told stories around the rosy glow.

But what was Mr. Hawkins saying? "Yes, Howard, that road is finished at last, and a beauty she is. Takes

off a full thirty miles now. You can make it in a morning. It surely is a great blessing to us lake folk."

Betsy looked at Pat, and Pat looked at Betsy. Their eyes sparkled. They knew what he meant. At last the road was ready and they could go down to the village!

They rushed into the house to tell mother the good news. Mother was just finishing the last of the doughnut frying. Frying doughnuts before that hot open fire was a hot job and mother's face was very rosy. She gave Pat and Betsy a crisp brown doughnut each and listened to their excited tale.

Mother was very glad to hear their news for she had been wanting things from the store for a long time. She said they would start getting ready that very night, so that they could set off in the early morning. Then she called father and Mr. Hawkins to have some coffee and fresh doughnuts by the warm fireside.

You can imagine how excited the children were. Betsy said she felt like jumping up and down and flapping her arms in the air. But Pat told her that wouldn't help mother in getting ready. Pat felt very grown-up and important.

Mother said: "Now, children, father will be very busy at the store, so you must look out for yourselves. Pat, you must keep a close eye on Betsy and take good care of your little sister. Betsy, you must be calm and careful and promise to obey Pat. Do you promise?"

Betsy looked a little worried for a moment, and then she said: "Yes, I promise, but he mustn't make me obey him too many times!"

Pat said he wouldn't make her obey him too many times; but Betsy must not ask questions all the time.

"But if I don't ask questions, how can I find out things?"

Mother said: "Pat, you will explain things to Betsy, won't you?"

And Pat, now feeling very important and grown-up, said: "Of course I'll explain everything to her. I know all about town!"

Just then Mary and Dora came back from their work in the milkshed.

"We're going to town!" said Betsy, proudly.

"To-morrow," added Pat. "Just as soon as we can get started."

"Oh my!" said Dora and Mary together. "Aren't you lucky. Here we poor older ones stay and do all the work while the children frisk off to town!"

"We have to see things," said Betsy. "I don't know about anything."

"I told you I'd explain it all to you," said Pat, quickly. "And we're going to buy things, too."

"Well, well! And what will you buy for me?" asked Dora.

"It all depends on what I can get for five cents," said Pat. "That's how much I can spend on you."

"I can spend five cents on you, too," said Betsy.

Dora just kissed them and said all she wanted was their two selves brought back safe and sound. Then she put on her bright blue cape and went down to see the moon with the oldest Hawkins boy.

Mary then packed their lunch. There were big slices of bread with butter and cold ham inside. There were fresh crispy doughnuts; oh so many! Mary also packed some hard-boiled eggs. There were two rosy apples each and a large piece of maple sugar for the children. Then she filled the little white pail with milk and put it beside the old black tea kettle.

Mother had been getting the wagon ready. She had piled soft deerskins and cushions stuffed with duck feathers on the wooden floor so that the road would not seem so bumpy and hard. The inside of the wagon looked very cosy when she had finished.

She then went over her list of things to be bought to make sure that nothing had been forgotten. That reminded Pat that he and Betsy had better count their money again, just to make sure it was still all there. Then he said, "Shall I keep your money in my strong purse too?" for he was very proud of that strong purse of his.

"No, thank you," said Betsy; "I'd rather keep my own in case you lose your purse."

"Father always keeps the money for mother when they go to town," said Pat.

"Yes, but father doesn't lose things. When you're big and wise like father, you can keep my money too."

So Pat didn't say anything more about money.

"Come children!" called mother. "Time for bed, now!"

Yes, the old brown clock that had come all the way across the sea was pointing to eight o'clock. That old clock seemed to know eight o'clock was bedtime. He called out, in his deep voice: "Ding, dong, ding, dong, bedtime, bedtime!" Then he looked at them very sternly from the shelf above the fireplace. So Betsy and Pat trotted off to bed.

They didn't feel the least bit sleepy. Oh my, no! Betsy said she felt like staying awake all night and Pat said he didn't even feel like getting into bed. However, as you may guess, they were both fast asleep in a very short time, dreaming of that wonderful trip to town.



9. THEY SET OUT FOR TOWN

EARLY the next morning, so early that it seemed like the middle of the night, Pat awoke to find Mary shaking his shoulder.

"Get up, young man!" she said. "Time for all young travellers to be setting on their way!"

"I don't want to get up!" growled Pat, sleepily. He could hardly open his eyes. He blinked them sleepily and half saw candles flickering on the table and . . . Betsy up, dressed, and eating her breakfast! You may be sure he jumped up then, very quickly.

"Hurry up, slow-poke!" said Betsy, as she cracked the top of her second egg. "I've been up for ever so long. So have Mary and Harry and John and father and the horses and everybody but you!"

Pat didn't say anything. He hurriedly pulled on his clothes and laced his new beef shoes. These were shoes cut out of the tanned skins of cattle and stitched with leather thread. Harry had made these beef shoes for him, and Pat was very proud of them.

"Hurry up, Pat!" called mother from the fireplace, where she was turning corn cakes. Mm...! Pat smelled those corn cakes and he did hurry.

By the time he was ready to begin breakfast, Betsy had finished her second egg, and was now starting on the pile of hot corn cakes. She looked very rosy and happy.

"You have to start on porridge, and then the eggs," she said. "But don't worry, I'll leave some of the corn cakes for you. Mother says we must eat a big breakfast for we have a long journey ahead of us."

Betsy started her third corn cake and Pat thought what a big head start she had on him. But you may be sure he soon made up for lost time.

Father had eaten his breakfast earlier and was hitching up the horses. Mother was carrying out rugs and the food. Then she bundled the children into their coats and gave them each a rosy apple to put in their pockets. She told them once again to be good, careful children. They promised they would, and felt to see if they still had their purses safely. Then mother kissed them good-bye, and they climbed up into the wagon.

At first they sat on the high front seat beside father. Dobbin and Smoky were hitched together down below them. It was funny to look down on the shiny broad backs of Smoky and Dobbin, for they usually had to stretch their necks to see them.

"Gee-up!" said father and cracked the whip. Dobbin and Smoky started forward. "Good-bye! good-bye!" called mother and the girls from the doorway. They waved their handkerchiefs till the wagon turned out of sight behind the barn.

Betsy's throat felt a little choky and queer till they saw Harry and John behind the barn. Harry and John dropped their tools, took off their big straw hats, and made a low sweeping bow as the wagon passed by. Then they threw their hats up and jumped up after them. They looked so silly that Betsy and Pat had to laugh at them. Then they felt much better.

Now they were out of the pasture gate and starting down the new road that followed the lake shore. Father called the new road a corduroy road because it was made of logs laid crosswise. It was bumpy; but Betsy and Pat liked little bumps.

On and on went the new road, with the shining lake peeping through the alder-trees on one side and the deep woods on the other.

Away up above, beyond the wavy tree tops, stretched the smiling blue sky. It was a very pretty road, that new road.

Soon they passed an old farm. People had lived there, but a long time ago. Now the house was empty, with one wall falling in. And actually there were bushes, real live bushes, growing out of the roof of that cabin! Betsy and Pat could hardly believe their eyes.



"Will bushes ever grow out of our roof?" asked Betsy.

Father laughed and said that bushes only grew out of roofs made of thatch. Betsy was glad to hear that. It didn't look right, somehow, to see bushes growing out of the roof of a house.

Now they had left the old farm behind and were in the deep woods again. Except for the creak-creaking of the wagon and the jingle of the horses' harness, there wasn't a sound. Everything was very still and green.

"It's just like an outdoor church," thought Betsy. Then some birds began to sing, and she called them

the choir of her outdoor church. But Pat thought they sounded more like the mice squeaking under the cupboard in the corner, and Betsy argued with him till father told them to stop their foolish talk.

After a while, they grew tired of sitting up there, on the high front seat. They decided to try lying on the floor of the wagon. Betsy fixed the cushions and skins comfortably and then they sat there for a while. There seemed to be far more bumps this way, but, do you know, Pat soon tumbled right off to sleep!

Betsy leaned back in her corner and told herself stories till father said it was time to halt. The sun was now high up in the sky, and Betsy felt quite hungry.

Father unhitched Dobbin and Smoky, and let them find fresh green grass for themselves. Then he scraped a clear space in the ground, put three stones together, and built a little fire. He put the old black tea kettle on the stones to boil the water.

Betsy got out the lunch and spread it neatly on the back of the wagon. She poured milk for Pat and herself. She passed the big thick sandwiches. She counted the doughnuts into three equal piles. Father made his tea, and they had lunch.

It was good fun having lunch like that. It was just like a cosy picnic of their own. Betsy and Pat were sorry when it was over.

After lunch, Betsy washed the cups in the little stream where father had got the water. Pat put out the fire to the very last little spark. Then they played tag and hide-and-seek among the big trees while father had a little smoke.

"Come along, children!" called father. "Time to start again!" They climbed up into the wagon, and

were off again. Soon they began to pass well-kept farms. These farms had not nearly so many stumps among the fields as their own, for they were older farms. They saw many plump cows out grazing, and three white horses. They saw a black cat sitting on a fence post, sleeping in the sun. Father told them that a black cat meant good luck. Betsy hoped that meant they could get all their presents for five cents each.

Soon they were on the big road that led right into the village.

"Oh, we're getting there!" cried Betsy. "I can see the school!"

Pat and Betsy were now sitting on the high front seat again, where they could see everything. They passed the log schoolhouse, the weaver's little house, the blacksmith's with its wide-open door, and the old Indian trading post. Then Pat said: "I think I can see Cousin Bob's store. Isn't that it, down at the end of the street, with the big white sign?"

Cousin Bob's store was a big frame building with a white sign above it, saying "General Store." Father drove the horses into the big yard behind the store. Some men, standing idly about, turned to stare at them. Some little children came running up to stare too, with their fingers in their mouths. Betsy and Pat knew better than that.

Father lifted Betsy and Pat down from the high seat. They felt rather stiff and tired. The little children staring at them stared very hard at their deerskin jackets. Betsy and Pat wished they wouldn't stare quite so hard.

Father took their hands and led them across the yard into the store. At last they had arrived!



10. IN TOWN

COUSIN BOB's wife met them at the door of the store. She was smiling happily. She was short and fat and wore a pretty pink dress. She had shining blue eyes that twinkled merrily. Pat and Betsy liked her at once. She made a great fuss over them and took them into a nice little room behind the store. That was where they lived. She washed their faces with a sweet-smelling soap and brushed their hair. Then she gave them some hot soup and biscuits. Betsy and Pat began to feel very much alive again.

Just then, Betsy whispered to Pat, "When will you start explaining things?" So Pat told Cousin Bob's wife about his promise to explain all the sights of the store to Betsy.

Cousin Bob's wife laughed at that, and said that he had a big job on his hands. She told them to go right into the store, and to walk right around from one end to the other. Then they would be sure to see everything. They went in, hand in hand.

There were some men in big hip boots and rough red shirts standing together, chewing tobacco. They

were standing by the door, and they didn't look very friendly, so Pat decided that they wouldn't start seeing things by the door. A tall Indian and his fat greasy wife were buying molasses from a big keg in the next corner, so Pat just whispered, "That 's molasses!" and hoped that that would be enough explaining for that corner.

"What 's that?" whispered Betsy, pointing to some brown sacks piled up along the far wall.

"Potatoes, I guess," said Pat. "But don't ask about things wrapped up, 'cause I don't know everything, you know."

"All right," promised Betsy. "See the guns! They won't be loaded, will they?"

"Of course not!" said Pat. "You have to buy the gun first and the powder and shot afterwards."

"Oh!" said Betsy, and added hastily, "Thank you. See the big tub of butter. It looks rather pale to me. I think the cows that gave the cream didn't get enough green grass."

"You mustn't say things like that!" whispered Pat. "Ladies don't talk like that!"

"But I'm not a lady yet!"

"No, but you promised to try to act like one!"

"So I will," promised Betsy. "See the pretty cloth. It is all stripes and checks. It must have come from across the sea. Nobody here can make cloth as pretty as that."

"It 's for the Indians," explained Pat. "Indians like those bright checks and stripes."

"I like them too," said Betsy. "I wish I were an Indian so that I could buy some."

"You wouldn't like being an Indian at night, with

no beds, just sleeping on the ground below a skin tent, perhaps with pouring rain outside."

"Oh, after I got my pretty checked cloth, I'd stop being an Indian and come back to you," said Betsy. "See the yellow sugar. Yellow sugar tastes almost the same as maple sugar. Dora says that town folk make good candy out of yellow sugar."

"But maple sugar is candy already," said Pat. "So maple sugar is better than yellow sugar. Look at the skins piled up behind there. Those skins were given by the Indians to Cousin Bob to pay for the stuff they take."

"What do they take?"

"Oh, they like molasses, tea, flour and beads; guns and cloth too, I suppose."

"If I had a skin, I could buy some things, too, couldn't I?"

"You don't need a skin, because you've got money. Shall we get our presents, now?"

"All right," said Betsy. "Have you still your money?"

"Yes, of course," said Pat, a little crossly. "Have you?"

"Of course; I never lose things!"

Just then, father called them. He was sitting on a barrel, smoking and talking to Cousin Bob. Now he wanted them to meet their grown-up friend.

"Children, this is Cousin Bob himself. Betsy, the little girl, and Pat, the boy."

Cousin Bob had a kind, rosy face, just like his wife's with the same twinkling eyes. So Betsy smiled at him and said, "I'm really Elizabeth O'Connel Morgan; Betsy is just for short"; while Pat shook hands, up and down, the way men do.

Then Cousin Bob said: "So you want to buy some presents, eh? Well, just look around and pick out what you want, while I fill your daddy's order. Then we'll settle up."

Betsy and Pat thanked him and looked around. It was such a wonderful place, just stuffed with so many things, that they didn't know where to begin.

"I think I'll buy Dora those blue beads to match her cape," said Betsy, pointing to some pretty glass beads hanging near.

"Remember you've only got five cents," warned Pat.

"Yes, I know," said Betsy. "And I'll get Mary some pink ones, so she'll look pretty too. And I'll get mother this pretty comb for her hair!"

"That comb will cost far more than five cents," said Pat. "There are diamonds in that comb."

"Oh no they're not! They are just glass. Little wee bits of glass can't cost very much. And I'll get father this nice red handkerchief and spotted ones for Harry and John. There! my shopping is all done!"

Betsy looked very pleased and proud as she placed her presents together and laid the money beside them.

Pat held his money tightly in his fist as he gazed around the big store. It looked as if Betsy had taken all the presents. He didn't know what to buy! At last, he decided to buy the whole family the same present, perhaps some candy, the nice chewy kind that lasted.

And that was just what he did. He bought a whole bagful of hard chewy white candy and little round striped balls. Cousin Bob told him that was the best kind for lasting. (What's more, he didn't even look at those fine chewy candies of his, not once till they

reached home! I'm sorry to say that Betsy prinked all the way home with hers, trying the beads around her neck and then around her wrists as big-looped bracelets and even sticking mother's diamond comb in her own yellow hair!)

By now, father had two big bags full of his purchases. Those bags looked very knobby and interesting. Betsy wanted to poke into them, right then and there, but Pat told her that a lady wouldn't do that. So Betsy behaved like a lady and went with him to pay for their presents.

They asked Cousin Bob how much they would be, but he said: "How much have you to spend?"

"Five cents for each person," said Pat.

"Fine!" said Cousin Bob. "It just works out right, with five cents each left over."

Betsy and Pat were very glad to hear that, for it meant that their purses wouldn't be quite empty. Then they put their shopping with father's and went to the little room at the back of the store again.

Cousin Bob's wife now had a hot dinner ready for them. There was delicious roast goose, just bursting with spicy stuffing, creamed potatoes, and a crusty mince pie. Cousin Bob brought from a big barrel in the store a plate of little sugar biscuits cut like stars, birds and animals, and the children nibbled these with cups of steaming cocoa. A little verse in pink letters ran around Betsy's cup, saying: "For a good girl." Betsy liked that cup very much.

Then it was time to go home. They had to leave the big new store with its barrels and bags, its guns and silky furs, its rolls of checked cloth and all the other interesting sights. They thanked Cousin Bob

and his wife for their kindness and went out to the wagon.

Quite a crowd of people gathered to see them start off. Betsy and Pat felt quite important, and happy too, because they were going home.

Just as they were going to start, Cousin Bob's wife came running up with a little parcel for each of the children. What do you suppose those parcels held? Why, there was a little circus of those sugar animals for Pat because he had loved them so much that he didn't want to eat them. And there was the little cup with the pink letters for Betsy. Weren't they pleased!

They waved good-bye to Cousin Bob and his wife and to all the crowd of Indians and men and staring little children, till they were far down the road.

The journey home seemed quite short, though it grew dark before they got home. The woods are very black and spooky at night, and full of strange noises, so you may be sure Betsy and Pat were glad to see the lights of home shining through the trees.

How glad they were to get home! Betsy thought that the very best part of going to town was coming back to your own warm home. And Pat, as he sat by the fire with his cheeks bulging, thought that the best part of going to town was coming home with presents, especially a present of chewy candy, the kind that lasts!



II. EASTER

EASTER SUNDAY dawned clear and sunny, a lovely April morning. It seemed as if the whole world were young and fresh and happy again.

Pat and Betsy were happy too, as they dressed in the early dawn. The whole family were up specially early, for they were all planning to go to church. Mother wanted them all to attend church on Easter Sunday.

As Pat and Betsy were setting the table for breakfast, Betsy said: "Pat, I think that there are secrets in the air!" She looked very happy and excited.

Pat looked around the kitchen. It looked just as it did any other morning. Dora and Mary were down milking, the boys and father were in the barn, and mother was turning hot Johnny cake. Perhaps that might be the excitement.

"Do you mean having Johnny cake for breakfast?" he asked.

"No!" said Betsy, scornfully. "We always have Johnny cake on Sunday. It is something else. Oh, you are so blind, you can't see anything interesting and funny!"

It was all too plain that Betsy knew about something interesting of which Pat hadn't the slightest idea. It wasn't till father had said the morning prayer and they

were all settled around the breakfast table that Pat knew what the great secret was. Easter eggs!

Easter eggs! A whole bowlful of them, dyed pink, red, blue, green and purple. Some were left plain egg colour and had fancy faces painted on them. That was Harry's work, of course. Harry could draw the funniest faces. Mother gave Pat a fat-faced laughing Humpty-Dumpty and Betsy a frightened pop-eyed Miss Muffet that made Betsy laugh with joy.

After they came back from church, in the late sunny afternoon, the whole family rolled their eggs on the smooth grass down by the gate. They were trying to see whose egg would stay uncracked the longest. That egg would then be the Easter egg king. Pat's poor Humpty-Dumpty man cracked at the very beginning, but what else could be expected from a silly old Humpty-Dumpty? Betsy's little Miss Muffet held out till she met Harry's bold red Pirate egg. That was the end of poor little Miss Muffet. So Harry's bold red Pirate egg became the King of the Easter eggs.

Then Betsy said: "But why do we have fancy eggs at Easter anyway?" She looked so worried and bothered that mother promised to tell them the old, old story that explained Easter eggs.

As Pat and Betsy curled up close to mother that still Sunday afternoon they listened to the story of the first Easter eggs.

"A long time ago," began mother, "in a country across the sea there was a famine. That means that the crops had failed and the people feared they would not have enough food to last the winter. They were very alarmed at this and tried to make what food they had spin out through the long winter months.

"Christmas came; and such a starved pinched Christmas as it was. However, the children did not mind very much for Christmas did not mean so much to them as Easter. It was at Easter that they had their fun and feasting.

"February and then March passed. The people were now living chiefly on brown bread, milk and eggs, and there was very little of the bread at that. However, the children were still happy and hopeful, for Easter would soon be coming. And at Easter everything would be lovely again. Easter had always been lovely, a time of happiness and joy.

"The mothers listened sadly to their children's happy talk. Always in the past the children had dainty little cakes and sugar plums and frosted cookies and wee round sweetmeats. Such goodies! But alas! how could they manage this Easter? The poor mothers didn't know what to do.

"The days went by, one by one, and still as they ate their pinched plain suppers, the children talked happily of the coming Easter, when everything would be lovely again. They imagined they were eating the spicy round sweetmeats that they ate by the dozen at Easter, and as the mothers watched them, their hearts grew sadder and sadder. What could they do?

"But, just two days before Easter, one mother had an idea. Such a wonderful idea as it was! After all the children would have their happy Easter! She rushed to tell her neighbours about it and soon all the mothers were busy over their Easter secret for the children.

"Easter morning came, bright and sunny, just as ours came. All the families were up early and dressed for church, just as we were. They all gave thanks to God

for keeping them through the long hard winter. They gave thanks too for the fresh new season that was coming, full of hope and promise. Then they set off for their homes.

“But instead of going the usual way, the mothers had the children take a little-used trail through the woods. The children skipped along gaily, glad of the lovely spring sunshine and the Easter treat that must be awaiting them at home. But, imagine their surprise when one child suddenly called out: ‘Come and see what I’ve found! A nest of lovely pink eggs! Yes, real pink eggs!’

“The children rushed to see, and then each child began to find eggs for himself. Some found whole nests of daintily coloured eggs, some found stray ones hidden behind little leaves and twigs. Such a wonderful surprise! Such fun as they had! Why, this was the very best Easter of all!

“And ever after that, the children of that country begged for a coloured-egg Easter, not sweetmeats and cookies. The eggs were far lovelier and much better fun! And that was how the Easter egg fun began.”



12. ON THE TRAIL OF PINKIE THE PIG

MOTHER often wished they had a pig to use up the extra skimmed milk and scraps. Mother hated to see anything wasted, and when farmers keep a pig all farm scraps are sure to be used up. Imagine how glad she was to hear that their neighbour, Mr. Hawkins, was selling his little pigs.

"I wish you would get one, father," she said. "A greedy, healthy little pig is just what we need on our farm."

Father laughed and promised that the very next time he went over to Hawkins' he would bring her back a young piggy. That was exactly three days later.

He put the saddle on old Dobbin and got ready to ride over. Betsy and Pat stood watching him.

"Are . . . are little pigs just like little lambs, only they haven't wool?" asked Betsy.

And Pat said: "Do little pigs ever all grunt at once?"

Father looked at them, standing there together. Of course they didn't dare to ask father to take them with him, but he could see as plain as day the longing in their faces. So he said, with a twinkle in his eyes: "Well now, it's so long since I've seen a real family of pigs that I can't be sure. I'll just have to take you both over to find out for yourselves."

And that was how Betsy and Pat got to see the pig family. They all rode over on old Dobbin. Betsy was in front, father in the middle, with Pat behind with his arms tight around father.

Old Dobbin jogged happily along. He didn't seem to mind how heavy the load. Once he stopped to nibble some tasty green grass, and Betsy almost slipped down over his neck. Another time the trees were so low that the branches scraped their heads. Two little chipmunks stopped their game of tag to scold loudly. A blue jay flew screeching through the woods telling of the queer sight he had seen jogging along the trail. And at last they arrived at the Hawkins' farm.

Much as they loved old Dobbin, they were very glad to stand on their own two legs on firm ground again. Then they dashed straight for the pig pen.

What funny, pinky things the little pigs were! How fat they were! How they squealed! And what a big porker their mother was! They weren't the least bit dirty! Why, they looked just like wee pink rolls of silk on tiny stumps of legs.

Their big mother came snorting up to see Pat and Betsy, sticking her hairy snout through the fence, her piggy way of saying "How do you do?" Her beady little eyes looked very happy. After her waddled her whole big family of ten pink piggies. They too stuck their little snouts through the fence and stared up with their tiny black eyes.

There was one little fellow with a funny black nose! He looked like the best of the big family, just the same, for he was so fat and greedy and bright-eyed. That was the very one that father chose.

Mr. Hawkins picked him up by his hind legs and

dropped him into the sack father held. Betsy thought they were rather rude in the way they were treating the poor little pig.

"Ee-ee-eee!" squealed the little pig, as if to say, "I don't like this, not the least bit!"

But whether he liked it or not, that little pig rode all the way home in the sack across father's back. Pat, sitting behind father again, could see the way that piggy was wriggling in the sack. And he had to listen to those "Ee-ee-ees" all the way home! No wonder poor Pat dreamed of squealing pigs that night!

When they got home, piggy was put safely away in his new pen. Mother was very pleased with him, though Pat tried to tell her he was a most dreadful cry-baby. The funny part was that as soon as piggy was safely settled in his own little pen, he stopped his cry-baby squealing. He behaved like a very sensible pig.

Betsy and Pat were surprised to see what a clean tidy fellow that little pig was. He kept his smooth coat so clean that they began to call him Pinkie. Of course he simply loved to tunnel in the soft earth with his wet little nose and in that way he got his face all dirty. And he had absolutely no table manners, for he even put his feet right in his food and made the most awful noises. However, outside of these two faults, he really was a very good little pig. He used to make his bed very carefully every night with the straw John gave him. He would proudly carry the straws in his mouth, pile up his bed, and then curl himself up for the night.

There was just one thing about him that bothered the children, and that was his tail. You see, to be really smart, every little pig must wear a fancy and very

curly tail behind. Now it seemed as if that little tail of Pinkie's was never going to curl. It was still as lank as a cow's tail. Betsy and Pat didn't know what to do.

John said: "Better put it up in paper curlers, Betsy, as the girls do before parties. Then your piggy will be sure to have a fancy-curved tail!" But his idea didn't sound just right to Betsy.

Harry said: "What that pig wants is to have his back scratched. Then his tail will curl with happiness." So Betsy and Pat got sticks and scratched and scratched and scratched that pig's back till their arms were weary. But though Pinkie was grunting in a low, very happy way, his tail was still as straight as ever!

Mary thought he needed some more buttermilk in his mash. But that didn't help either. Then Dora thought he needed a little more hay for his bed at night, as he was now getting to be quite a big fellow. So he got more straw to make himself a big cosy bed, but his tail was straight as straight!

Then father said: "What that young pig wants is to be quartered, smoked, and hung in hams!" Father said it in a very stern way. Little Pinkie looked at him, very wisely, and thought to himself. The next morning, Pinkie's tail had curled up as prettily as ever a little pig's tail could curl!

So Pinkie the pig lived on a while longer. He grew to be a fine fat fellow. He was quite happy as long as he had plenty to eat. And his tail was curled as prettily as ever.

However, one day Pinkie took sick. He wouldn't get up, he wouldn't eat his breakfast. He just lay there, too sick for words. He looked so sad that Pat and Betsy felt very sorry for him. John and Harry

said that pig of theirs certainly knew how to look sick. Father got the medicine bottle.

It was a long black bottle with a nasty smell. Betsy and Pat were glad they didn't have to take that kind of medicine. They wondered how their pig was going to like it.

Father got an old leather shoe that had the toe cut out. He put this in Pinkie's mouth and Pinkie took hold of it wearily, thinking that he might as well chew the thing and try to forget his pain. That was when he was surprised, for Harry held his jaws firmly over the shoe while father poured the medicine down the shoe, through the hole and into his mouth. He squealed a little in his old cry-baby way, then he swallowed the stuff, finding that this was the easiest way to get rid of it. And that was how Pinkie took his medicine!

The next morning he was up early, rooting happily again in the soft earth. He ate his breakfast greedily, with his usual bad manners. Betsy and Pat were very glad to see him his old self again, and to know that they would have their Pinkie a while yet.



13. AT CHURCH

AFTER the new road was opened, the Morgans found they could get to the village in time for church. Though they had to leave quite early in the morning to get there, they did not mind that. They were all very glad to be able to get to church again.

Mary and Dora took turns in staying home to look after the farm and get dinner. John had stayed home once, but he had let the soup scorch and the meat burn and had forgotten all about the corn cake in the bake kettle. After that rather burned dinner, the family decided that the best place for John was at church!

They all put on their best clothes when they went to church. Mother wore her hat with the yellow daisies on it, and father wore a stiff collar and his best shoes. Those shoes were bought ones that had been made across the sea in England. They were so shiny that Betsy and Pat could almost see their faces in them. Father never wore his best shoes except when he was going to church or the meeting house. Pat thought that he would like to have a fine pair of shoes like father's when he grew up.

Betsy wore her blue coat with the six silver buttons on it and a blue wool cap to match. She wore her blue cap because mother had not yet finished making her new spring straw hat. When Dora was not going to

church, she let Betsy wear her pink coral beads. Then Betsy felt very grand indeed!

Pat wore his deerskin coat with the fringes, beads and all. When he wore his deerskin coat, he always held his head very high and his back very straight. He did so hope he looked like Big Bear!

Mother gave the children a clean linen handkerchief each Sunday. They kept these handkerchiefs deep down in their pockets. Then they would pull them out and flick them open, very proudly. It wasn't everybody who got a clean white handkerchief every Sunday!

They travelled along the new road in the old wagon. They piled the back with skins and rugs to make it soft and comfortable. Father and the two boys sat in the high front seat, while mother and the children sat on the rugs. Mother always taught Bible verses to Betsy and Pat as they jogged along the leafy green road. Betsy and Pat liked saying those smooth verses over to themselves. They seemed like quiet Sunday music in their ears.

At last, after a long, tiring journey, they reached the churchyard. Father helped mother and the children out, while John and Harry looked after the horses. Betsy and Pat always felt so stiff and funny when they got out of the wagon. It seemed as if their legs had forgotten how to move.

The church stood in a little green clearing with the tall fir trees rising behind. It was made of rough brown logs. A fence of alder saplings was built around the church to keep the cows and animals out. Inside the fence was a nice grassy plot with a little bed of spring flowers. A path bordered with big round stones led up to the church door.

People walked up the little path nodding and smiling to each other. But when they opened the door and walked inside the church, they became very quiet and grave. Betsy and Pat hung on tightly to mother's hand as they entered the church.

Inside, it was very dim and hushed. The walls were dark and brown except for the four square windows set with tiny glass panes. A path of brown matting led up the middle of the little church to the altar. There were rows of brown benches on each side. These had been made by the men of the church in their spare time. The altar cloth of fine linen and embroidery had been made by the women of the church in their spare time. The people were very proud of their little church for they had all helped make it and furnish it.

Pat and Betsy always felt very small and unimportant in church. They sat up straight on the hard brown benches and folded their hands, just as mother did. Their legs couldn't reach the floor, so they just had to dangle them back and forth in the air. They were glad they were sitting near the back because they could see everything without being rude.

Church always began with a long prayer. They all knelt down with bowed heads till it seemed to Betsy that her neck would break. Then they sat up again and began to sing.

A little old man with white hair and funny gold spectacles played the old-fashioned organ in the corner. He pumped his feet up and down and moved his back and his head and his arms up and down too. Pat thought playing an organ must be very hard work.

However, the old man made very sweet music come out of that little old organ. Then every one stood up

to sing. Betsy and Pat loved the singing in church, for mother had taught them most of the hymns and psalms. So they always sang out loudly and proudly.

Two little boys across the aisle from Betsy and Pat stared at them with wondering eyes and open mouths till their mother poked them. Then the little boys stared ahead for a while. But Betsy and Pat kept right on singing. They were very sorry when the music ended and they had to stop.

Next the people read together from their Bibles. Pat and Betsy enjoyed the reading, though they couldn't make the words out very plainly. Mother showed Betsy the place in her Bible, and Betsy tried to follow. But she got lost again and again, till she decided she would just listen instead of reading.

After the reading, they sang together. Then came the sermon. Betsy and Pat always knew that the sermon was coming because the minister cleared his throat several times as he turned the pages of his book. The people all knew, too, for they settled themselves as comfortably as they could on the hard benches. Betsy saw the two little boys across the way get hard white peppermints from their mother. She didn't think it was very polite to eat peppermints in church and yet she wished she had one to keep herself busy!

The minister talked on and on. Sometimes he shook his fist and sometimes his voice was deep and trembly. Betsy thought he must be scolding them. She was glad then that she was a good girl on Sundays.

Pat was now busy counting things. He would count everything he could, over and over. He counted the people in church. There were twenty-eight. He counted the children. There were eight. There were

twelve benches. Five were not used. There were four windows with four tiny panes of glass in each. That made sixteen panes altogether. He counted the cracks in the wall beside him. He counted the tiny gold buttons that ran down the back of the lady in front of them.

He hoped Betsy had seen all those tiny gold buttons. Betsy was just counting them herself when he looked at her. That made her lose her place and then she had to begin all over again. There were thirty-two tiny gold buttons! Betsy and Pat gazed at each other in amazement. What a waste of good buttons!

This lady also had a very interesting hat. It was of black satin and lace and had a big curly ostrich feather falling over one side. When she moved her head, the curly ostrich feather waved in the air. Pat wished he had a feather like that when he played Indians. And Betsy wished she had a feather like that for her big wavy fan when she played being queen!

Just then a little bird outside burst into a pretty, cheery song. By craning their necks towards the nearest window, Betsy and Pat could just see the bird. He was sitting on a low branch in his brown and yellow suit, singing out his songs to the blue skies above. But suddenly he flew away and the pretty song was ended. Pat thought he must have seen a juicy worm wriggling in the flower bed.

Then Betsy saw that the two little boys across the way had fallen asleep! After they had had peppermints to keep them busy! Betsy nudged Pat very carefully and they smiled at each other. They, at least, knew how to sit up and stay awake in church.

The sermon ended sooner than they expected. Then

they all knelt down to pray again. After this last long prayer came singing. This time Betsy and Pat did not know the tune, but they tried their best. You see, the two little boys across the aisle were now awake and staring crossly at them, so Betsy and Pat decided they ought to show how good little children behaved.

But, alas for their fine plans! Betsy started too soon and everybody looked sideways to see who the young singer was. And, as if that wasn't bad enough, Pat had to keep on singing the last verse after everybody else had finished. Oh dear, poor Pat and Betsy could have hidden under the bench for shame! And, of course, those two nasty little boys were snickering and smirking! However, mother promised to teach them that hymn so that they could sing it out properly next time. Then they felt much better.

After church, the people met outside and shook hands and talked with each other. They asked each other about their families and their crops and told all the interesting news they had heard. Then they fed their horses, ate a few apples or sandwiches, and set off for the journey home.



14. PLANTING TIME

AFTER the snows had melted and the dear old sun came warming the earth again, father and the boys began to get the ground ready for planting time. Mr. Hawkins loaned them his two oxen, great slow creatures, and they pulled the harrow up and down the fields, between the old stumps. All the bigger rocks were rolled out and piled up against the old stump fence. Any roots and pieces of dead wood were piled together in little stacks and burned. These little piles burned night and day with lots of blue misty smoke. Betsy and Pat loved the smell of that blue smoke. It made them wriggle for joy, away down in their little insides!

When the days grew longer and warmer, the planting began. The potatoes came first. They were planted in long rows from one end of the field to the other. Even Betsy and Pat helped with the potato planting.

Father had not very many potatoes for seed and he wanted to make these go as far as he could. So with a sharp knife he cut out the eyes and planted them. The eyes are in the little brown dents you see on the potato skin. The tiny green shoots always spring from the eyes. So as long as father planted eyes, he was sure of getting potato plants.

Betsy and Pat thought this eye business was so strange! To think that potatoes had eyes, so many

at that and such funny ones! And to think that the plants grew out from the eyes! Oh yes, this eye business was very strange indeed!

Betsy planted the eyes very carefully, making sure that each one faced proper way up. And, as you can guess, she was very slow at her planting. Soon she had dropped far behind the others.

"Hi, Betsy!" called father. "What's the matter?" Betsy usually was a very quick worker, so father came over to see what was making her slow, so slow.

How he laughed when he saw how carefully she had planted the pieces of potato with each little brown eye staring up to heaven.

"But, father," said Betsy, "if I don't put its eye facing the right way, the potato will start growing down the wrong way, won't it?"

And again father laughed as he helped Betsy finish her row. "No, Betsy, potatoes grow the right way no matter how you plant them. Any plant knows where the sun and warmth is, old girl!"

After the potato planting came the sowing of the grain. Father, Harry and John did this. They fastened bags of grain around their waists and then they walked over the fields, scattering the grain as they went. After that they turned the ground over again, covering up the seeds.

This time Betsy wasn't at all alarmed when she saw them covering up the seeds with clouds of earth. She knew that the little seeds would find their way back to the sun and warmth, no matter how they fell, upside-down or downside-up!

Father also planted a small plot of peas and a good-sized turnip patch. And, of course, there was a big field

of tall Indian corn. Corn grew well and gave big crops.

Along the inside of the fence was the pumpkin patch. The pumpkin vines sprawled up the fence and all over the ground with their big rough green leaves. In the summer there came strange sticky yellow flowers that later ripened into great orange pumpkins.

Down in a sunny corner beside her flax patch, mother had planted some flat yellow seeds that father had brought her back from town. Father called them love-apple seeds but that was all he could say about them. Furry green plants grew up with leaves like small bracken fronds. Then came small star-shaped yellow flowers. They were sticky and furry, like the pumpkin flowers. And the flowers in turn died away to show small green fruits.

You can imagine how the family watched those small green balls grow. The balls turned from green to a streaky orange and then they changed to a clear shining scarlet! How lovely those red love-apples looked in the clear morning sun!

It seemed a shame to pick them, yet the family were very curious to taste them. The store man had said that they made very good eating. So mother cut them into slices and they were all surprised to see that the love-apples were juicy and pulpy inside and held a great many slippery yellow seeds. She served them with cream and sugar and everybody agreed that love-apples tasted every bit as good as they looked.

Nowadays we call love-apples tomatoes, but I think the olden name is much prettier, don't you?



15. MOTHER'S GARDEN

MOTHER'S garden was down in a sunny spot beside the potato patch. It was not very large but it was a very precious garden, for in her garden mother grew flax.

Betsy and Pat thought flax such a wonderful plant because mother got cloth from the flax plants. Yes, she did! From the coarse threads in the stems of the flax plant mother made heavy creamy cloth called linen. Linen was very strong and would wear for ever, so mother said. So you see why Pat and Betsy thought flax so wonderful.

Because mother had so much to do, she couldn't look after her garden alone. All the family helped her a little. Harry built a low fence of split logs around her plot so that the animals wouldn't go tramping over her garden. Then John loosened up the earth for her and made it ready for the seeds.

Mother brought up her bag of seeds from the store-room. Flax seeds are flat, thin, and shiny brown. One morning when all the world was very still and there wasn't the least puff of wind, she planted these precious seeds. She let Betsy help her because the flax plots always belonged to the women of the family, and because Betsy hadn't asked a single bothersome question that morning. That was very wonderful indeed!

Betsy felt very pleased with herself as she walked beside mother, up and down, sprinkling the shiny seeds over the dark brown earth. The little seeds just slipped through her fingers and twirled down to the ground. She was sorry when they were finished.

Harry then went over the ground again, covering up the seeds and pressing the blanket of earth down over them. It would have to be a very sharp-eyed bird that could see those seeds after Harry had finished.

The spring rains came and washed the earth. The yellow sun climbed higher and higher in the skies of blue. The woodsy people put on their new spring gowns. And the little flax seeds poked up their green heads.

The tiny plants grew and grew. The slender stems shot up towards the sky, waving their little spear-like leaves in the morning breeze.

But there were other little green plants that waved gaily in the morning breeze. They were very sturdy and coarse little fellows. Mother shook her head when she saw them. Mother didn't want any weeds in her flax plot, so that was why father took his turn at helping. Right after the very next rainfall, when the ground was moist and loose, father weeded the flax plot. He pulled out every single bold young weed and left just the slim green flax plants. Mother smiled happily when she saw what a good job father had made of the weeding.

Days and days of warm happy sunshine followed, and then came the first little blue flowers. Betsy clapped her hands excitedly when she saw them. They were so dainty and pretty, just like little blue stars nodding on their slender stems.

The wild bees buzzed noisily around when they found those little blue flowers. All day long they hummed amid the blue and green flax patch till the blue flowers wilted away and tiny green seed-boxes grew in their places.

The seed-boxes ripened golden brown. One little box cracked open and spilled its store of shiny brown seeds. Then mother said it was time the flax was gathered in before it became too ripe.

Mary and Dora helped mother gather the flax. They pulled the plants up in handfuls, roots and all. Then Pat and Betsy laid them in bunches and carried them over to John and Harry. The boys drew the bunches of flax plants through a coarse comb so that the seeds were pulled off from the stems and fell into the skin spread out below.

Mother kept most of the seeds to plant the next spring. Sometimes Harry crushed them up to get oil from them. Then mother used the meal left from his oil making for cooking. She could also make a fine poultice for sore chests from that meal. Or if Pat and Betsy got a very bad cold in the raw winter days, mother would make a tea from the flax seeds. It was a strange, slimy kind of tea but it was a sure cure for heavy colds.

But it was not for the seeds that mother grew flax. The important part of the flax plant is the bundle of threads in the stem. To get these strong threads, mother soaked the plants in water for several days. The water loosened and dissolved the stuff that held the threads together in the stem.

The flax was then taken out again and dressed. That means that all the woody part was broken away

and the strong stem threads drawn out. These strong stem threads were divided into fine ones which were twisted together to make one strong thick thread. This was now a pale yellow colour. It was linen thread. The linen thread was woven into that strong linen cloth that mother said would last for ever.



16. THE MAY BASKET

IN the soft spring days, when all the world seemed leafy green and dancing, Betsy and Pat always felt very happy. They rose happy in the early dewy mornings. They sang and skipped about the farm all day long, just helping everybody. There seemed to be something in the warm gentle air that made them almost burst with joy.

Everything was so lovely in the spring. The grass spread its soft green carpet over the dull earth again. The vines that climbed over the old sheds burst into tiny green leaflets. The dandelions bloomed like little gold pots around the old stone well. The wild cherry and currant drenched the world with their spray of white and rosy petals. And the sky was always smiling blue above.

It was very lovely out in the woods these first warm days, too. Here the moss grew thick and springy under foot. The trees stretched high above and waved their leafy heads against the sky. Tiny yellow and purple violets nestled among the moss. Pale pink star-flowers hid there too. Sometimes Pat and Betsy

found trailing vines of wee dainty twin-flowers, like baby bells. Wild lilies peeped up from the shady greens. And there was a slim straight orange flower that raised its flaming head proudly.

One day, when they were wandering around in the woods, picking a few flowers and talking a good deal, Betsy suddenly said: "I know! Let's make a May basket, like the ones Dora was telling us about, and surprise mother, eh, Pat? Remember how mother surprised us at Easter? Now it is our turn to surprise her with a May basket!"

But Pat didn't quite remember that May basket story, so Betsy had to explain it to him. "You know, you do it to show that you are glad it is spring and that you love the person to whom you give the basket. You find a basket and fill it with all the pretty flowers you can find. Then you put it on the doorstep just at night time and run away to hide. You see them come out to get it and you see how glad they are. And the best of it is they don't know who sent it. It's your own happy secret!"

Oh yes, Pat remembered now. But then his face clouded again. "We haven't any basket, Betsy," he said. "You know that mother always wants to get a few baskets."

"Oh," said Betsy, "that's easy! We'll just make our own!"

"Make one? You don't mean that, Betsy!"

"Surely I do! You just weave the strips of bark together, in and out. I know how 'cause I saw Shining Eyes make one."

"All right, then," said Pat. "I'll get the bark and cut it for you, but you can make it into the basket."

The very next day, they started on the basket. Pat brought the strips of bark and laid them in a heap in a dark corner of the workshed. Then Betsy sat herself down and busily started on the weaving. She laid eight strips of bark on the floor and then started weaving a long piece in and out.

Pat sat down and watched her. Then he said: "It's beginning to look like a mat, Betsy, but I don't see how you can turn a mat into a basket."

"Oh, I do that at the end," said Betsy. "I just run a strip around the edge and then I pull it together. I push the inside down till it begins to look like a basket. When we put moss and fern and flowers in, it will be a very fine basket."

"I hope so," said Pat, as he handed her another strip.

The next day he went out to the woods to get the soft green moss to stuff the basket. He brought it back to the workshed in a big roll. Betsy packed it inside and it was wonderful to see the way that moss filled up the loose places and holes in the weaving. It poked through, soft and green, in the very prettiest fashion.

"That's why I left some holes," said Betsy, as she proudly stared at her work. "It looks all the nicer now. Next thing, Patrick, we must get the flowers!"



So they took a pail with them to the woods. They dug up little fairy ferns, pale pink star-flowers dewy violets and wild lilies, and five of the proud slim orange flowers. Then they care-

fully pulled out trailing lengths of the dainty, rosy twin-flowers with their shiny green leaves. Their fingers were very grubby and gritty when they had finished, and Betsy had a great brown streak across her face, but what did that matter to them? They marched proudly homewards carrying the pail between them.

Just inside the gate, Harry saw them and called out, "Yo-ho, my lads, what have we here?" But they pretended they didn't hear him. Perhaps if he talked sensibly, they would answer sensibly.

They were very glad when they got their load safely into the old shed without any one else seeing them. Then they set to work filling the basket.

What fun they had! They packed the moist earthy roots in tightly and stuffed wads of soft moss about them. The basket began to look very pretty. Then Betsy tucked in the roots of the trailing twin-flower. The little bits of vine ran down the outside and waved their tiny pink bells in the air. Betsy gasped, "Oh, Pat, it's just beautiful!" Even Pat thought it was very pretty.

Betsy could hardly eat her dinner for excitement. It was too bad that there was suet pudding with maple syrup that night, for she wasn't the least bit hungry. However, not even a dozen lovely May baskets could stop Pat from eating suet pudding with maple syrup! No, sir, not Pat!

After dinner, they crept out to the shed again to put the finishing touches to the basket. That was what Betsy called it; but it really meant that she just fussed over it like a mother hen with little chicks. She lifted any drooping violet heads; she perked up the saucy orange flowers, and she saw that all the trailing

twin-flowers were trailing gracefully. Then she sat down on the floor beside Pat to wait for the twilight to come.

They heard the soft moos of the cows, the cackle-cackle of the hens, and the low honk-a-honk of the geese as they settled for the night. They heard the bedtime songs of the sleepy little birds. Two heavy-laden bees droned past the open door. They caught the odour of sticky newly-burst leaves that the little evening breeze brought up from the lake. They saw the shadows of twilight deepen around them. At last, it was time!

Arm in arm, with the precious May basket between them, they crept quietly up to the house. The door was half-open, so that they could just set the basket on the doorstep. Then they gave a loud rap-a-tap! on the door and raced around the corner to hide.

They hid behind the big rain barrel. They could look around the sides, and they saw mother come to the door. She flung up her arms, and cried, "Mercy me! Just see what the fairies have left on my doorstep!"

Dora and Mary came running. How surprised they were, as they cried, "Oh, see the lovely May basket! What a beauty it is!" Then mother picked up the basket and carried it into the house. She looked very pleased and happy.

Pat and Betsy thought it was now time to go in. They shook themselves, brushed the little bits of grass off their clothing, and sailed proudly into the house. Pat whistled in a very fine way and Betsy was humming to herself, so innocently.

When mother said, "Come, children, and see my

lovely May basket!" they looked very surprised and pretended they didn't know a thing about it.

Pat said: "Do you like it? Where did you get it?" And Betsy said: "Isn't it lovely! A May basket for mother! The basket is made quite nicely too, isn't it, mother?"

Mother smiled and said she was very proud of it. She said that basket made her feel happy all over. She also said she was very glad that the dear little fairies were still doing their deeds of kindness.

At that, Pat looked at Betsy and Betsy looked at Pat. It was a very wise little look, as if to say, "Hm . . . ! We know all about those fairies! Indeed we do!" And they were very, very happy children.



17. BLOSSOM TIME MAGIC

THIS is just a very, very short story because that was just what it was. However, even though it was so short, it was so delightful that I thought you would like to hear about it. Good things often come in small parcels, you know.

The time was a cool scented May night. The little farm in the clearing was very still and quiet. Father and John had gone over to Hawkins' to borrow their big saw and they had taken Pat with them. Harry had driven Dora and Mary down the road to see a friend who was going to be married. So that left mother and Betsy alone on the farm.

Betsy and mother sat by a low fire in the big fireplace. Mother kept that little low fire going because she said it looked cheery. She was busy plaiting straw for a new summer hat, while Betsy was curled up on the bear rug close to her knees. Betsy felt very happy as she sat there, sniffing the sweet smell of the dried grass and wondering about many things.

A lovely yellow Lady Moon rose over the dark spruce and fir trees and came peering in through the little window. There was no candle burning, for mother could plait quite well by the firelight. The slim young Lady Moon cast a path of clear silvery light from the window right across the room and over mother's head.

"O mother!" said Betsy, happily. "Isn't it happy, just you and I sitting here in the moonlight?"

Mother rumped Betsy's curly head and went on with her braiding. Betsy stared happily into the fire.

She watched the fire glowing softly and she seemed to see a little band of rosy fairies dancing gaily to themselves in gowns of twirling scarlet and gold. Then whisk!—off they went, just like that, and all she could see was a blackened stub of wood.

"Mother!" she said, suddenly. "Are there fairies, really?"

Mother looked at Betsy's earnest face and at the slim young Lady Moon smiling to herself outside. A spray of dainty cherry blossom laughed gaily back at that young Moon. Then she said: "Betsy, dear, if you come outside with me, I think you'll get your answer."

So Betsy took mother's hand and they went out together.

Oh, how lovely and clear the whole farm looked! Why, it was just like cool, pretty, silver sunshine!

"Where are we going, mother?" asked Betsy.

"Down to the orchard," said mother, as she led the way. Down the grassy path they went, on a path just splashed with silver moonlight. When they reached the orchard gate, mother stopped.

"Now, Betsy," she said, "I want you to close your eyes and open them when I say. Then tell me where you think you are."

Mother turned Betsy around three times, ending up with her facing the young apple orchard that basked in the moonlight. Then she said: "Open your eyes, Betsy!"

Betsy opened her eyes and gazed and gazed at the lovely sight before her. Before her stretched dozens and dozens of fresh young apple trees dressed in leafy clouds of dainty pink and white. The cool night air was full of the sweet scent of dewy blossoms. A little song sparrow poured out its happy song from a pinky tree nearby. And the slim young Lady Moon smiled down from above.

Betsy whispered: "Mother, it's just like fairyland, isn't it?"

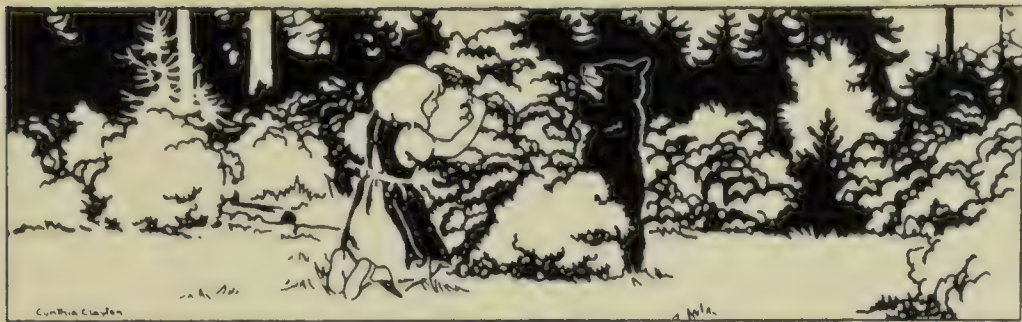
Mother nodded her head as they both gazed in silence.

Just then a tiny wind came prancing through the orchard, whisking the little fairy dresses this way and that. The satiny skirts and petticoats blew up and down. And some of the wee lace bonnets flew off with that wind. That made the slim young Lady Moon laugh with glee.

"O mother!" said Betsy, "I never knew fairyland could be right here, in our own orchard!"

"Yes, dear," said mother. "We can always find fairyland right around us, if we only use our eyes and look."

And that was how Betsy found fairyland. To think that fairies danced in their own orchard in the magic of blossom time!



18. THE SHEEP

THERE were five sheep on the farm, five round woolly creatures that all looked much the same to Pat and Betsy, except the father. The father sheep had curly horns and a black nose. He was a rather proud fellow, that father sheep, and he was especially proud in the early springtime, when all the little lambs were born.

Little lambs are the dearest things on earth. They are wee and white and woolly. They have such funny little legs. And they seem to be always capering and scampering about. Betsy said she always felt like singing when she saw the little lambs. They really made you feel happy just to look at them.

The sheep and lambs were kept in a big pen down by the barn. Harry and John kept close watch over those lambs, for they didn't want any of them to get lost or stolen.

Betsy and Pat looked after one little fellow. This poor little lamb had lost his mother and was left all alone in the world. He was very, very small and scared-looking. He wobbled helplessly on his funny little legs. Oh dear! He was such an unhappy wee creature that mother took pity on him and brought him up to the house.

You can imagine how that thrilled Betsy and Pat. Why, it was just like the story of the little lamb in the

nursery rhyme. He used to lie on an old rug in the corner, near the fire. At first, he just lay there, scared blue. But, after a little, he began to grow stronger and look around him. Then mother brought him a bottle of warm milk and he drank that milk greedily, just like a baby. Betsy and Pat thought it was so odd to have to feed a lamb from a bottle. But when mother told them that that was the only way of saving the little lamb's life, they thought it was a very sensible plan.

They soon grew to love that little lamb. They called him David, after David the shepherd boy. David began to grow and soon became a very bright little fellow. He loved to have his thick white curls combed, and he could almost say "Thank you" with his soft shining eyes.

However, when the warm sunny days came and David was getting to be a rather spoilt young fellow, mother said he must go back to live with the rest of his kind. Betsy and Pat felt sad at this news and so did David. You should have seen how his fluffy tail drooped! Still, what mother said was always done, so handsome David went back to the sheep pen. Just what he thought about this move, I don't know. Anyway, I think he soon decided to make the best of it, for that was about all he could do.

With the first shimmering hot days came the time that all sheep hated. This was the day of their yearly bath. Sheep dislike the water so much that they object to taking even one bath a year. But, whether they object or not, it has to be taken, so that the wool will be clean before shearing.

As they had only the five sheep and the lambs, father just washed them in the old dug-out, filled with

water. He grabbed the first sheep by her ear and leg and dipped her under the water. How that sheep did object!

"Bah! bah! ba-a-ah!" she cried, in a very angry way. She kicked and struggled, and splashed father from head to foot. She made a great fuss, but she didn't come out of the dug-out till her wool was well washed. Then she was set free to dry herself. She gave father a very cross look. Then away she waddled with her head held high in the air.

By the time all the sheep and lambs had been washed, the place was very damp, the air was full of the smell of wet white wool, and loud were the bleatings and baas of the sheep as they told each other all about that unpleasant ducking! Such a day!

But their troubles were not yet over. After the washing came the shearing. That was when Mrs. Sheep lost her heavy wool coat, but as the days were now long and hot, it was quite time she stopped wearing her thick woollies.

Harry and John did the shearing. Each had a pair of sharp shining shears, just like big scissors. They caught a sheep, held her down firmly by foot and head and began to clip.

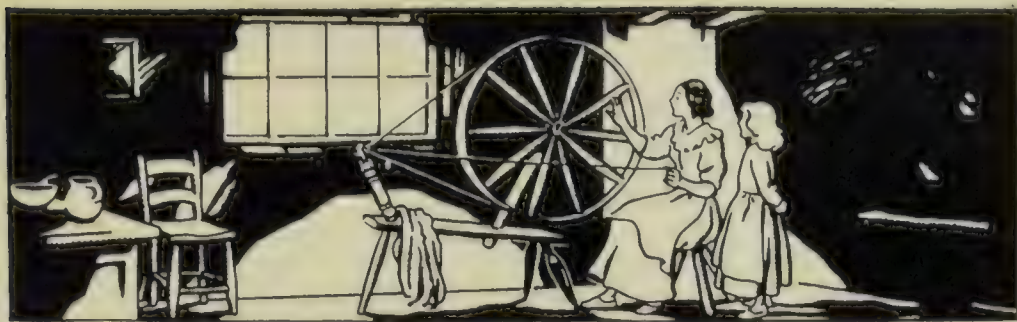
"Snip, snip, snip!" went the shining shears and off tumbled Mrs. Sheep's winter coat.

Betsy and Pat were surprised to see how fine and silky the hair next to the roots was. It was not at all like the coarse curly hair on top. They were also surprised to see what a clean white skin Mrs. Sheep had. Her bath must have been a good one after all.

"Snip, snip, snip!" went the shears as they clipped off the last of the wool. It tumbled to the ground in

one big piece and Mrs. Sheep stood there naked, looking rather foolish. Then she was shooed outside and her troubles were over till next year.

After the sheep were all shorn, there was a fine amount of wool. Mother would soon be busy making warm winter clothing, while the sheep kept cool all summer in their light hot-weather suits. Shearing the wool works out very nicely both for the sheep and for the farmer's family.



19. BETSY'S NEW DRESS

MOTHER always promised Betsy that she should have a new dress after shearing time. Betsy had seen the wool clipped off the sheep in a great fluffy roll. She had seen Mary wash it in warm soapy water till it was sweet and clean. Then it had been hung out to dry in the sun and wind till it fluffed out again like a little white cloud.

"It looks very pretty," said Betsy, as she watched Mary at her work. "Yes, it looks very pretty and warm, but it isn't much like a dress yet, is it?"

"Now, Miss Impatience, just you wait and see!" said Mary.

So Betsy waited and watched and told herself she mustn't ask any more questions. Mary next combed the wool out into big rolls. These woolly rolls were about two feet long and looked just like long white curls.

"A giant's little girl would have hair like that," said Betsy. "Those curls would just about fit her!"

"Yes?" said Mary. "Well, your giant's little daughter isn't going to get these curls. To-morrow my spinning wheel shall claim them!"

Sure enough, the very next day, after she had finished washing the dishes and making the beds, Mary

got out her spinning wheel. "Zzz, zzz, zzz!" went the spinning wheel, as it twisted and spun the rolls of wool into long threads of yarn. Mary then wound the soft white wool into skeins.

She worked for many days at the spinning, for this wool was to make all the new blankets and clothes for the grown-ups, as well as Betsy's new dress.

After a great many skeins of the fluffy wool hung by the fireplace, Mary said: "You can start dyeing the yarn for Betsy's dress any time now, mother. We'll keep the rest for the blankets and gowns."

So mother got out her big dye kettle. Pat lugged up many pails of water to fill that kettle, while Betsy carried in more wood to keep the fire going.

Mother had first learned from the Indians how to make her own dyes. Big Bear had shown her what a fine dye the bloodroot gave. He dug up some of this plant and cut the root with his knife. Betsy and Pat were surprised to see the thick bright red juice that came trickling out. They knew then why that plant was called bloodroot. It was from this plant that mother got her lovely red dye. She also added salt to the water to make the dye keep its colour in washing.

When wisps of steam twisted up from the dye kettle and the red dye was bubbling and ready, in went the skeins of white wool. Mother stirred the yarn around with two smooth wooden sticks, to make sure all the wool was getting dyed. Then she lifted them out again, dripping skeins of gay cherry red.

"Ooh!" cried Betsy, dancing up and down with excitement. "Look at the lovely colour! I'm going to have the prettiest dress in all the world!"

The skeins were then hung out in the shade to dry. Mother carefully scoured her kettle with soap and sand. Betsy and Pat asked her for the two wooden sticks. You see, the sticks had become dyed too, a deep blood red. Pat thought they would make very fine war clubs the next time they played Indians. But Betsy wasn't so sure she would enjoy a game that sounded so messy and bloodthirsty!

After the dyed wool was all dry, it was packed up with the white wool into a great roll. Father then rode into town with his load of yarn and gave it to the weaver to weave into cloth. Father let the weaver keep some of the wool for himself, as payment for his work.

Two weeks later, the bundle was brought home again, now fine rolls of thick woolly blanket cloth, heavy homespun for dresses and one length of gay red homespun.

"Look!" cried Betsy, "my dress is almost here now!"

As soon as mother had spare time, she started on Betsy's new dress. She cut out the cloth with her sharp scissors. She sewed it quickly with her flashing needle. Very soon a dress began to appear. It had puffy sleeves, a full skirt gathered on to a little waist, and a pretty lace collar around the neck. That lace collar was part of an old collar of mother's and Betsy was very proud of it.

Betsy wore her new dress on Sunday, when the Hawkins family came to dinner. Dora and Mary wore their best dresses, so Betsy was very glad she had a fine new dress to wear too. She scrubbed herself from top to toe, she brushed her hair till it shone like

gold, and then she put on her new red dress with the lace collar.

Everybody thought her dress was very nice indeed. And so they should! Betsy herself thought that it was the prettiest dress in all the world. Perhaps she was right.



20. GOING FISHING

PAT never felt that it was really summer time till he was allowed to go barefoot. How he longed to throw off his heavy beef shoes and run barefoot again through the cool green grass! But no matter how often he asked, mother would not let him go barefoot till the warm weather had come to stay.

How excited Pat was then! He wriggled his toes for joy in the soft powdery dust down by the gate. He raced wildly through the cool spring grass. He let his toes sink down, down into the lovely oozy mud of the lake shore. Mm . . .! how good it felt to be free again!

Of course, when Betsy saw what fun Pat was having racing about barefoot like a young Indian, she thought she must try it too. So off came her shoes, and she hopped timidly around on the hard ground beside the house. Brr, that ground felt hard and cold to her soft white feet! There were some sharp edges of rock that looked as if they were waiting to cut her. There were some horrid splinters that looked just ready to run into her. So she decided she would wear her shoes a

while longer. She was glad Pat hadn't been around when she was trying going barefoot!

Just as soon as Pat was allowed to go barefoot, he started talking about going fishing. Pat seemed to think going barefoot and going fishing were two things that went together. Morning, noon and night he talked of going fishing, till at last John said: "All right, Patrick, I'll take you fishing! We'll go this very afternoon and then, perhaps, we'll have some peace in this house."

Pat almost whooped for joy. At last he was going fishing! And goodness knows what he might catch! What fun!

And, of course, when Betsy saw Pat's excitement and joy, she decided that she wanted to go fishing, too. So what could poor John do but smile and say he'd be glad to take her also!

Betsy helped Mary to make a little lunch of egg sandwiches and doughnuts, in case they got hungry. Mary told Betsy she could pretend she was the mother and have a little party of her own out there in the woods. Betsy liked that idea.

Pat was helping John to get the lines ready. At least, he thought he was helping, but what John thought about it, I don't know. There was a sharp hook and a piece of rock called a sinker on each line.

"It's called a sinker because it sinks the line down, isn't it, John?" asked Pat.

"Yes," said John; "now be careful or you're going to catch yourself on that hook again. There! that's the second time you've done it!"

Poor Pat had again caught the seat of his trousers on one of those sharp hooks. John muttered something about a big fish as he pulled the hook out. And

after that Pat was very careful that he didn't catch himself any more.

They were going to use worms for bait, but they didn't get them till they were up the stream. The stream had a deep trout pool where there were supposed to be some very fine fish. That was where they were going.

They climbed up the stream along the rough bank. Over logs and under logs they went, over wet rocks and around wet rocks they went, up and down, always dodging branches and brambles, till at last they reached the pool. Here, trees fringed the banks and leaned away over the water. The pool looked dark and interesting under the shade of those trees. John said that was where the big fish hid.

"I hope they're not too big; at least, not like whales, anyway!" said Betsy, as she climbed up to a safe-looking log.

"Here, young lady!" said John. "You've got to sit still around here. I don't want to go fishing you out of that pool."

"I don't want to be fished out!" said Betsy.

"Then stay well back and don't fall in!" said John.

"I wouldn't think of falling in," said Betsy, in rather hurt tones.

"Very well then; you sit there while Pat and I get the worms."

Betsy did as she was told, and thought to herself that this fishing business wasn't any fun at all. She watched John and Pat turn over big rocks and then pull out wet wriggling worms. Ugh! Fishing couldn't be very nice, if they had to use worms!

But when she saw John bait the hooks with the

horrid wriggling worms, she decided that fishing was horrible and that she didn't want to fish. No, sir, she did not want to fish!

John said: "All right then, off you go down the stream where it's shallow and you can't drown yourself. But remember, Pat and I came out here to fish, so you'll have to keep quiet."

"Yes," promised Betsy, "I won't drown myself and I won't make any noise. I hope you catch some fish too. Good-bye!" Then she climbed down off her safe-looking log and crawled along the edge of the pool to the shallow stream below.

She thought it was much prettier here. The stream was wide and full of big wet stepping-stones. It was so shallow that it didn't matter if you missed a stepping-stone and fell in. The water gurgled happily to itself and the sunlight danced merrily over the laughing water.

Betsy took off her shoes and sat down to enjoy herself. She dipped her big toe in first, just to see how the water felt. Brr, it was cold. Little shivers ran from that pink big toe right up through her whole body. Yet it was a rather exciting feeling too. She dipped her toe in again and again, and squealed happily with excitement. Soon she was gaily splashing both feet up and down and having a fine time.

She saw a little squirrel staring at her with sharp black eyes. The little chap looked very puzzled. Betsy laughed softly to herself as she flipped her toes up and down in the sparkling water. "I guess the poor little fellow has never seen ten pink toes before. Well, I don't care how long he stares. Perhaps his mother never told him that staring is rude."

Just then, a shout from the pool above awakened

her. "I've got one, Betsy!" called Pat. "A beauty! He's a great big fellow and he's still flopping!"

Then she heard John scolding Pat and telling him that he must keep quiet when fishing. Betsy shrugged her shoulders and smiled to herself. Hm . . ., far more fun down here splashing around in the sun than catching all the fish in the world up there in that dark spooky hole!

Some time later, when Pat and John came crawling down, Betsy was surprised to see that they had a string of six fine fish. They were plump shining grey fellows that glistened like silver in the late afternoon sun.

"Aren't they beauties?" asked Pat, proudly. His eyes were very bright and his cheeks flushed with the excitement. "They were biting all the time. We could have caught lots more only it's time to go home."

Betsy looked at those shining silver fish a little sadly. "Poor things! I guess they were pretty hungry before they'd eat your old hook with its horrid worms!"

John laughed and called her a tender-hearted little chicken. Whenever John called her that, Betsy knew he was feeling very happy and pleased with things.

He was happy, too, for he carried Betsy home almost all the way on his back. Betsy called that kind of a ride a piggy-back ride, and she loved them. Pat marched proudly on ahead, like a little man, carrying the string of fish over one shoulder. Betsy said it looked as if Pat was giving his fish a piggy-back ride too.

Then Pat turned around and said: "No, Betsy, you're wrong. I'm just carrying my fish the way all good fishermen carry their fish."

But Betsy still thought he was being kind and giving his poor fish a piggy-back ride!



21. SCHOOL TIME

BETSY and Pat were not going to school just now because they lived too far away from the schoolhouse. Later on, when they grew older, father promised that they could ride into the village school on old Dobbin. But they were now too young for that long journey through the woods.

However, Betsy and Pat had gone over to Mrs. Hawkins' last spring to a little children's class held in her kitchen. Mrs. Hawkins had her own two children, another neighbour's three children, and Betsy and Pat. They used to have school from two to four in the afternoon, as that time suited Mrs. Hawkins best.

Mrs. Hawkins sat at the head of the kitchen table and the children sat around her. Then they learned their letters, a little writing, and how to count. Mrs. Hawkins would hear them say their lessons over and over, while her needles flashed in and out among the grey wool of the socks she was knitting.

Betsy and Pat liked learning their letters best. You see, besides the letters she had drawn on the big slate, Mrs. Hawkins also had a whole set of gingerbread letters. As soon as a child knew a letter and was absolutely sure he knew that letter, Mrs. Hawkins let him have the gingerbread letter for himself.

The first letter Betsy got was B, and a nice big letter it was. "B is for bed. B is for Betsy. B is for butter.

B is for bee," she would say over to herself, as she eyed that big gingerbread B. She was very proud when she got that gingerbread B for herself.

If a child was naughty or wouldn't learn his lessons, Mrs. Hawkins made him sit on a little stool in the corner. The children always looked so foolish and ashamed when they had to sit in the corner. Betsy and Pat were glad that they never had to sit there.

However, Mrs. Hawkins began to find that the little school took up too much of her time and so it was stopped. The children were all very sorry to have their little school stopped. Before school on that last day, they picked a great lovely posy of wild flowers to give to Mrs. Hawkins as a present. They put some pretty green fern in among the gay flowers and even tied a little piece of red ribbon around the stems. Then they chose Betsy to give the flowers to Mrs. Hawkins.

You can imagine how pleased and proud Betsy was! But how her little heart went thump-a-thump! under her best red dress as she said: "Here are some flowers for you, Mrs. Hawkins, because we are sorry you can't teach us any more. We like you for our teacher, and we don't want you to stop your school."

Mrs. Hawkins was very happy at that, and she told the children that she would start the school just as soon as she could get spare time again.

Betsy and Pat had not forgotten their lessons in the meantime. Every night, father or mother would ask them their letters and how to spell easy words. Then they would count things. Pat loved counting.

In the daytime, they would often play school by themselves. They pretended that they were going to the real school in the village now. They knew all

about that school for they heard the big children talk of it and they had once visited that very school. They took turns in being teacher. When Betsy was the teacher, Pat was the class. When Pat was the teacher, Betsy was the class.

They usually played school down in the barn, for it was quiet there in the daytime. To-day Pat was the class, so he sat on a wooden pail turned upside down.

"That's your hard board bench!" said Betsy. "You're the boys' class. That other pail is the girls' class, over on the other side. Now, boys, you must not look over at the girls' side! Just mind your own business, please!" Betsy shook her finger crossly at the boys' class and they turned their heads straight towards the front.

"Have you all got your slates and pencils to-day?" Teacher looked very stern, for her class was so forgetful about the slates and pencils.

Pat nodded his head several times to show that the boys' class all had their slates and pencils.

Teacher looked pleased. "I am so glad that you are at last remembering. Ready? Spell cat!"

The class wrote the word down at once. It seemed to be a well-known word.

"Next word, mat. The cat sits on the mat." Again the class wrote the word down quickly. The spelling lesson went on, the class getting most of the words. But once teacher had to scold.

"Johnnie Martin! That boy in the last bench! Keep your eyes on your own work! There's no sense in trying to copy her work, because for all you know, her work may be wrong. See how silly you are!"

Johnnie Martin hung his head and looked rather ashamed.

Then teacher corrected the spelling lesson. Pat Morgan, the little boy in front, had just one mistake. He couldn't spell man! He wrote down mam! Teacher thought that was very funny till Pat said he would go home if she didn't stop laughing.

"Oh no, dear, don't go home!" cried teacher, stopping her laughter very suddenly. "Look, we'll have a drawing lesson now. You can draw a cat sitting on a mat in front of a fire and have a man standing by it."

"I want to draw Indians," said the boys' class, sulkily.

"Oh, do you? Well, you can pretend that is an Indian cat sitting on a red and blue Indian mat, and have a little camp fire with a real Indian standing by it. Now see how well you can do it."

However, just here the class had to stop work to let the grey geese waddle across the school floor. "Please hurry up!" said the teacher, as she stared crossly at those waddling geese. But a curious red hen with all her young family, followed after the geese, and by the time they had passed, Pat's pencil had rolled away. So teacher and the class both got down on their knees to hunt for it under the loose straw.

"Oh, dear!" panted the teacher. "I never lose my pencil when I'm your class. You couldn't have been working very hard!"

"I was," said Pat, crossly.

Then they bumped their heads with a loud smack! and that was the end of school for that day! However, before her class ran away, teacher rang the old broken cow bell. That meant that school was dismissed; so her class wasn't running away after all!



22. BUTTER MAKING

MARY was the butter maker of the family. Such delicious golden butter as she did make! Betsy and Pat thought she made the very best butter they had ever tasted. This is how Mary made her famous butter:

First, she poured the milk into shallow pans and placed the pans in the shelves in the log milkhouse. Those milk pans were really just like wide wooden bowls. Betsy and Pat called them the "squaw bowls," because father had bought six of them from the Indian squaws. They were fine strong bowls, but you may be sure that mother boiled them all very carefully before she used them.

After the milk had cooled, the yellow cream rose to the top of the pans. Mary then skimmed the cream off into a big stone dish.

"Why does the cream always rise to the top, if cream is heavier than milk?" asked Betsy. Betsy always would ask these questions.

Mary laughed as she skimmed off a great clot of stiff golden cream. "For the simple reason, my dear

child, that the best always comes to the top, like the big berries in a pail, like the best apples in a box, and myself in our family!"

Betsy looked at Mary a little crossly. It sounded as if Mary was joking again. Betsy didn't like to be made fun of.

Pat saw that Betsy was bothered, so he said: "I think it's because cream is fat and fat floats. Remember how the tallow floated on top of the water in candle making? And how the fat bubbles spread on top of the soup pot? I think that's why cream gathers on top of the milk."

Mary stopped her skimming to look proudly at Pat.

"Good for you, Patrick! You've got a good head on your shoulders, my lad!"

Pat then felt quite proud of himself, though he looked down at his scuffed beef shoes and pretended he didn't care a bit.

Mary now had the cream skimmed off all the pans and packed away in a big stone crock. She said it must ripen for a few days before she could make it into butter.

Betsy thought it was very strange to let cream ripen, just like corn or apples. However, she didn't do her thinking out loud, or Mary might joke at her again. She certainly did not want to have any more jokes made about her. Instead, she made herself useful by helping Mary clean the squaw bowls and set them in a row outside the milkhouse to dry in the sun.

Three days later, Mary asked Harry to get out the churn and the children knew that the cream would now be turned into butter. Harry set the churn down on the hard ground outside the kitchen door. The

churn was just like a big wooden tub with a hole in the lid. A flat-bottomed stick called the dash was worked up and down through this hole. The dash splashed and churned the cream until it broke into little pieces that soon stuck together in lumps of pale butter. It sounds very simple, but to churn the thick cream into butter was really a heavy job, as Mary knew.

First, she poured the thick sour cream into the churn. Then she slipped over the dash handle the lid with the hole in it. She tucked a clean wet cloth around that hole in case any cream splashed out. Then she began her heavy work of lifting the dash up and down, up and down, and up and down again.

"Thump, thump!" went the dash. "Splash, splash!" went the cream inside the churn. And "Tra-la-la!" went Mary, humming happily to herself.

By and by, she stopped her work to stretch her tired arm. Pat saw her stretching, and he said kindly: "Mary, shall I help you for a few minutes while you rest?"

Mary knew how badly he wanted to help, so she let him stand on a little stool and lift the dash up and down, while she took a little rest. That dash went up and down rather slowly, but Mary told him he was going finely.

When Betsy saw what Pat was doing, she wanted to have a try too. But Mary said: "Oh no, Betsy! You could never do it. It takes a strong arm to lift the dash, eh Pat?"

And Pat proudly answered, "Yes, it does!" His face was now very red and shiny. There were some little drops of water on his forehead. The dash was

now going a little more slowly than when he had started, but he thought he was doing very well indeed.

Mary and Pat were so busy taking turns at churning the cream that they didn't notice that Betsy had slipped away. They were too interested in their butter making to miss the weak-armed Betsy. You will find out later just what the weak-armed lady was doing.

After a little while, Mary looked into the churn to see how the butter was coming. The cream had now broken into tiny yellow crumbs and that meant the butter would soon come. They tucked the lid on again and thumped the dash up and down, singing happily because their work was almost done.

A little later, Mary said the job was finished. She lifted out the blobs of pale butter, drained them and patted them into shape with wooden paddles. The butter was specially good this time and Mary said it must be because of Pat's help. Imagine how proud Pat felt then!

"Betsy!" he called, "Betsy! Come and see our butter."

Betsy came to see, with one hand behind her back. She looked at the butter and then she said politely, "Isn't it pretty!" and then added in very proud excited tones, "But see mine!"

From behind her back she drew her little blue saucer. On that little blue saucer was one little bit of pale watery butter, just about the size of your finger nail!

"See my butter!" she cried, excitedly. "It's really good butter, too. Mother let me make it for myself by shaking the cream in the little glass bottle till the butter came. See!"

Betsy gazed lovingly at that little watery lump of butter all alone on the blue saucer. Pat said politely: "It looks very good but, of course, it takes a strong arm to make butter like Mary and I make."

He looked proudly at the stack of yellow butter pats, but Betsy wasn't paying any attention to his. She was still gazing lovingly at that little pale scrap of watery butter. Her own very first butter!



23. THE STUMP FENCE

BETSY and Pat always thought that the very nicest part of the whole farm was down by the old stump fence. When father first began to clear his land for the farm, years ago, he made that old fence. Other men had helped him clear his land and make the fence, just as he had helped them. They cut down the trees and built the log cabin. They burned the stumps and dug around the roots. Then a yoke of oxen pulled and pulled at the strong roots. Bit by bit, they dragged the old stumps away, over to one side of the clearing. All the big stumps were piled in a row here. And that row of stumps made the first fence. That is why it was called a stump fence.

Father and the boys didn't make that kind of fence any more. They now split up logs into long lengths and made a wooden fence called a snake fence. But the old stump fence still stood around the first clearing, and that was where Betsy and Pat loved to go together.

It was always warm and sunny down by the stump fence. It was quiet and still, too, for the farm spread away behind them. If Pat and Betsy sat very quiet and still, they could see many little woodsy neighbours.

They once saw two little squirrels having a great game of tag along the ragged roots of the old stump fence. They were very pert little fellows with soft

brown coats. They had bright black eyes, just flashing with mischief. They had big fluffy tails that they held cocked up, just so, like furry squirrel fans. Around the old stump fence they raced, squealing with fun and excitement.

Those little squirrels went so fast that sometimes it seemed as if they were flying. They took big jumps from one root to another and never once did they miss. After an especially long jump, they would look proudly at each other, as if to say, "My, aren't we the smart young fellows!"

Betsy and Pat could have watched them all day long, only Betsy had to sneeze at the wrong time! Such a loud sputtery sneeze as it was! Of course, that sneeze put an end to the little squirrels' game. Away they scampered, off to the shelter of the green forest, scolding loudly as they went.

However, there were other little neighbours that they could watch beside the squirrels. Why, there was a robin's nest hidden away in one little corner of the old black stump. Betsy and Pat never touched that nest for mother told them that would scare the robins away. So they would sit, quiet as mice, and watch the doings of the robin family, and perhaps see father robin come flying over the fields with a fat worm wriggling in his beak. That was a little treat for mother robin when she was sitting on the nest.

Father robin had a far prettier suit than mother robin. He wore a gay red vest, a smart black cap, and a coat of rich brown. Mother robin looked rather faded and drab beside her gay husband. Betsy and Pat didn't understand why they wore different suits till John explained. John said that the mother robin wore

the plain clothes so that she would not be seen by their enemies when she was sitting on the nest or caring for the little birds. Mother robin didn't mind wearing dull colours as long as her husband was bright and gay. Then Betsy and Pat said they were glad she wore dull colours.

They once caught a glimpse of four oval blue eggs in the nest. They were a lovely colour, just like the sky on a warm sunny day. Betsy thought it was too bad the chickens and geese couldn't lay pretty eggs like that. However, I'm sorry to say that something happened to those pretty blue eggs. Perhaps the bright blue caught some little thief's eye. Anyway, the four blue eggs just vanished from the nest. Poor father and mother robin felt so badly that they flew away and left the empty nest behind. That was the end of the robin family.

Just about this time, Betsy and Pat noticed a gay little chipmunk frisking about the old stumps. He was about the size of the squirrels. His coat was of a brighter colour, a soft golden brown, and he had a pretty orange and black stripe zigzagging down his back. He seemed a very plump, well-fed fellow. Betsy and Pat began to think he must have been the thief that stole the blue eggs. They weren't very fond of the pert little chipmunk after that.

All sorts of wild flowers grew around the old stump fence. There were pretty little blue flowers, there were tiny yellow ones that looked like baby buttercups, and there were deep purple ones that would climb up and all over the old stumps. There was also a beautiful wild honeysuckle vine that hid the old burnt stump at the end of the fence with its lovely bloom of deep orange.

When all these pretty flowers blossomed out and filled the air with their sweet scent, along came the wild bees. "Buzz, buzz, buzz!" They flew around the old fence all day long gathering their precious store of honey.

John often tried to follow these wild bees and find where their bee tree was. He still hoped to find it. He wanted to mark that tree and come back again in the winter when the bees were all asleep. He would then get a fine store of lovely honey. He said that wild bee honey was even better than maple sugar. So you may be sure that Betsy and Pat hoped he would find that bee tree.

Once Betsy and Pat thought they had found the bees' nest right in the old stump fence. It was soft and grey and shaped like a big cone. They raced back to the farm to tell John that they had found the bee tree. Imagine how disappointed they were to find it was only a wasps' nest! Once again the bees had fooled them!

However, even if they didn't find the bees' nest, they saw many more interesting sights. Once they saw a fat brown grouse sitting on the fence and thumping his wings up and down. His wings made a loud zoom-zooming sound. John said that the poor old grouse couldn't sing pretty songs to his mate as most birds do, and that was his way of showing his love. Betsy and Pat felt very sorry for the poor old grouse that couldn't sing. His zooming certainly didn't sound very pretty.

Another time they saw two little brown bunnies go racing across the fields and under the fence. Where they went Pat and Betsy never could discover. They

looked and looked but they didn't see the least sign of a bunny. It was just as if the fence had swallowed them up!

One evening, just before sundown, Harry was giving the sheep some salt. He used to spread the salt out on a flat rock in the field and the sheep would come running. They loved salt. Harry said they could smell the salt a long way off. This particular night, Pat and Betsy were very much surprised and delighted to see the shy brown eyes of a little deer looking over the fence. He must have smelled the salt too, and come to see if he could get any. But when he saw Pat and Betsy staring open-mouthed at him, he forgot all about the salt. He turned and bounded off into the forest, just leaping legs and a flash of stubby white tail.

Sometimes Betsy and Pat would just sit in the shade of the big old cedar stump and tell each other stories. Perhaps they were Indian children resting after a long march. Or they might be two little white clouds sailing across the sky, and would tell of all the pretty sights they saw down below. Sometimes they talked of giants, or sky boats, or they took an imaginary trip down to the store. No matter what they did, they were always happy. There must have been happiness magic in that old ragged fence!



24. BAKING DAY

SATURDAY was baking day. Mm . . . ! how good the old log kitchen smelled on Saturdays! Hot fresh bread, crisp brown doughnuts, golden apple pies, yellow corn bread, were all baked on Saturdays. Then because a big fire was kept on all day, the soup pot bubbled merrily from its hook on one side of the fireplace, while the meat stew simmered on the other. No wonder Pat and Betsy liked to stay around the kitchen on Saturdays!

Mother began her baking with the bread. She rolled up her sleeves to the elbows and mixed the white dough in a huge blue bowl. Pat and Betsy were busy at their old job of carrying in wood. It was simply alarming how much wood that fire used up on these days. Mary was cleaning out the bake kettle and Dora was getting the old black pot ready for the doughnut frying.

When mother had finished mixing the dough, she shaped it into many round loaves which she placed side by side in the bake kettle. This bake kettle was mother's oven. It was just like a large pot with a flat bottom and tight cover. After mother had her loaves

all neatly tucked away in it, she fitted on the lid. Then she placed the kettle right on top of the red-hot coals. She raked some of the red coals up around the sides of the kettle and heaped more of the fire right on top of the lid. This kettle made a very good oven and turned out nicely baked loaves. But, oh the wood it needed! Just ask Pat and Betsy!

After mother had the bread making over, she started on the doughnuts. This time she added milk, eggs, and fat to her mixture. The dough was soft and yellow. She spread it out on the table and rolled it till it was about an inch thick. Betsy thought it looked just like a yellow mat on the table.

Then mother began to cut the doughnuts. That was the part that Pat and Betsy loved to watch. Sometimes she just cut little balls of dough, at other times she made the real circle doughnuts, and sometimes she just left them in short strips, like fat yellow fingers.

Mary did the frying for mother, for it was a hot, tiring job. She had the huge kettle bubbling with hot melted fat and into this fat she popped the dough shapes. A few minutes later she fished them out again, now dripping brown doughnuts. Pat and Betsy thought there was nothing quite so good as a hot, freshly fried doughnut.

Mother was now busy on her pies. Dora had soaked the dried apples in a bowl of water early in the morning. They were now swollen out brown and thick again, ready to become pie filling. Betsy thought pie making seemed to be very easy. Mother just mixed a little salt and rising with the flour and then rubbed in the fat. When the fat was all crumbled in with the flour, she added water to make it into dough.

Then she turned the dough out on the table and started rolling it thin. That was all there was to it, yet mother's pies tasted so wonderful, not at all like the ones Dora made. There must be some magic in it, thought Betsy.

After the loaves had been taken out of the bake kettle, all crispy and brown, the pies were then laid in. Mother had eight pies, filled with apples, pricked on top and nicked around the edges. There were also two little baby pies, one at each end of the row of big pies. Who wouldn't take in armfuls of wood to get a little roly-poly of his own as a reward?

Making the yellow corn cake came next, but Pat and Betsy didn't think that was very interesting. So they helped Dora with the stew. Dora had the small pieces of dried meat simmering in water in the old stew pan. She was going to add potatoes, salt, one onion and some small pieces of turnip to that stew. At the very end, she would drop in a piece of yellow butter, and then it would be a dish fit for a king! At least, that was what Pat and Betsy thought.

They were now washing the potatoes and turnips in a pan of cold water. Dora then rubbed and scraped the skin off ready for cutting. She cut the vegetables into small pieces and the children dropped them into the stew pan. They fell down into the bubbling brown mixture and disappeared from sight, only to pop up again away off at the other side of the pan. Pat and Betsy were sorry when there were no more pieces to drop.

"Shall we wash the onion for you now?" asked Pat, rather doubtfully.

"No," said Dora, "you don't wash onions. You don't need to. But you can peel it, if you wish."

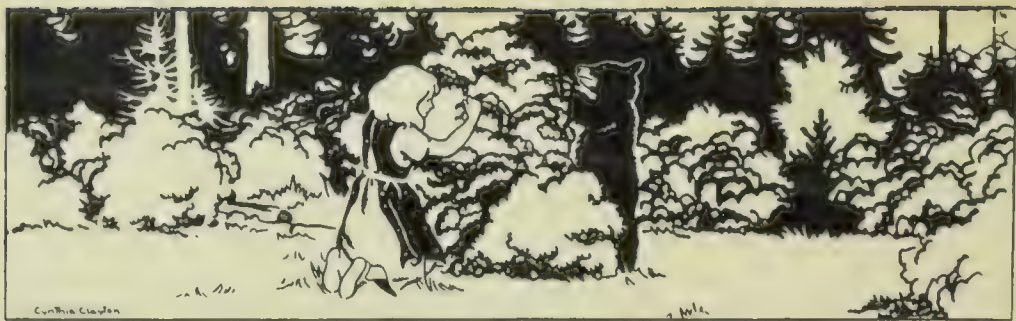
"I'm . . . I'm not very good at peeling onions," said Pat.

"I'm not either," said Betsy, quickly. "Because I can't see what I'm doing for the tears in my eyes."

Dora laughed as she quickly peeled and cut the onion herself. Poor onions! Nobody ever wants to do them!

Soon the stew was gurgling a happy little stew song to itself. The soup, on the other side, woke up and bubbled loudly too. Mary had finished her doughnut frying and was putting the big frying-kettle away. Then she hung the old black tea kettle on the hook and they began to get ready for dinner.

John and Harry always said they could find their way to the house blindfolded on Saturdays. They said all they had to do was to follow their noses and they would land right at the kitchen door, sure enough. Everybody liked baking day!



25. BERRY TIME

IN the hot summer days, when the great shining sun rode high in the heavens, Betsy and Pat spent a great deal of their time out in the woods, gathering berries. It was cool and green and shady in the woods. Little birds would flutter by and sometimes trill out a pretty song. Once or twice, a little wild bunny peeked up at them with wondering eyes and high cocked ears. Chattering squirrels and chipmunks raced through the fir trees, gathering their stores of fir seeds. Oh yes, it was very lovely in the woods, but mother had made Pat and Betsy promise that they would keep to the edge, close to the cornfield where father was working.

Sometimes they filled their wooden pails high with great juicy blackberries. These blackberries grew on prickly vines that rambled up and down over the fallen logs and roots. Sometimes they just sprawled flat along the ground. If the children weren't careful, they would get their hands scratched and their clothes torn by the brambles. But Pat and Betsy were very careful. They knew how to pick blackberries.

John always said they knew how to eat them too, for when they came home at night, tired and heavy-laden, their faces were usually just as purple as could be. Yes, purple blackberry juice all over their faces, just like young Indians in their war paint.

But mother always said: "Now, John, stop your teasing. They have done very well to get such well-filled pails of berries. Come and let mother wash you clean, children!" And so they were made clean and rosy again.

At other times, they would gather the round huckleberries. Huckleberries were very pretty little berries, but they took so long to fill a pail! However, father was especially fond of huckleberries, so Betsy and Pat just kept right on at it. They would say over and over to themselves, in a little sing-song, "Father likes huckleberries! We're gathering huckleberries for father! Father likes huckleberries!" Betsy would sing high and Pat would sing low, just as they heard the grown-ups sing at night. Somehow, they seemed to pick faster when they sang that little sing-song to themselves.

They could also gather the big soft blueberries and the juicy red wild raspberries. Mother was very pleased with the big pails of berries they brought home and she was very proud of her sturdy little pickers.

After the berries were brought home, mother usually made a fresh berry pie as a treat for their suppers. Then she would dry the rest of the berries, pressing them into a big cake, just as the Indians did. She kept her cakes of dried berries for the long hard winter. When she wanted a change for dinner, she would break off some of the dried berries and soak them in water. Then she would add a little sugar and simmer them over a low fire. In this way she could serve stewed berries or a juicy berry pie again. How glad they all were then that Betsy and Pat were such good berry pickers!

When the children were out in the woods together, they talked of many things, of sky boats, of giants, of fairies, of little David the lamb, of the Hawkins family, of what they wanted most in all the world . . . and of bears! When you were out there in the big cool woods, the first thing you thought of was . . . bears! Pat loved talking of bears. He used to tell Betsy all the bear stories he had ever heard and some of them were very wonderful. In fact, he would get so excited over his bear stories that he would quite forget about his berry picking.

Then Betsy would say, gently: "Yes, that's a very interesting bear story and I'm glad it's not true. But you must not forget about your picking, Pat. Or else John will say you've been eating all yours again!"

So Pat would start picking those red raspberries again and wish, oh so badly, that he could meet a real bear and then have a really true bear story of his own to tell. "If I should meet a bear, Betsy," he would say, "I would say to that bear, 'Stop! I'm Patrick Morgan, your friend. I won't hurt you. Where do you live? Have you a family? Are you getting lots to eat these days?'"

Pat pretended that the raspberry bush was the bear and he spoke out very proudly. Betsy said: "Oooh! Pat, would you really?"

"Sure!" said Pat. "Then that bear and I would be good friends. I'd let you be his friend too, Betsy."

"I . . . I don't want to be a bear's friend, thank you," said Betsy.

That made Pat laugh a little. Girls were so scared of bears. It was funny how scared they were. How-

ever, if Pat had only known what was coming, I'm afraid he wouldn't have laughed like that.

Betsy moved off to some new bushes down the trail. Betsy was a hard worker and usually picked her bushes clean before Pat was half finished. Pat kept on picking slowly at the old bushes, thinking a lot about his friends, the bears, you may be sure.

Betsy was picking quickly, filling her pail high, happily telling herself a little story about a wee lost elf. That was much pleasanter than horrid bear stories. Suddenly, she was just about startled out of her wits to see a chubby brown fellow on the other side of her bushes, busy picking the red berries too. He was round and furry, and looked very soft and cuddly. He sat up on his fat hind legs. He had small shiny eyes, pointed ears and a big, hungry mouth. He would pick off a cluster of berries and wrap his long red tongue around them and that was the end of the cluster of berries.

Betsy watched him, too terrified to move. Baby bear kept on stuffing himself with the juicy red berries. He was having a good time. He looked very happy and pleased with himself. He looked just about the same way as Pat did after a suet-pudding dinner. Strange to say, Betsy began to like this furry little fellow!

If baby bear saw her, he paid no attention to her. He just kept on with his picking and eating. Betsy thought to herself, "The greedy little bear isn't going to get all the berries. I'm going to have some too!" She set to picking again, racing against that greedy little baby bear.

Just then, Pat decided it was time to move on. He wondered where Betsy was. She was awfully quiet.

But when he saw Betsy on one side of a bush and a brown bear on the other side, he gave one cry of "Bear! Betsy, a BEAR!" and started for home as fast as his legs would take him.

That yell scared the baby bear. He gave a grunt of fright and off he started for home as fast as his fat legs would take him!

Betsy looked at those two runaways, and laughed to herself. How funny boys and bears were, each so scared of the other! Then she picked up her own well-filled pail and Pat's rather empty one and started for home.

She saw father and John and Pat come running across the fields towards her. Pat waved his hand and cried, "We're coming to save you, Betsy!"

That made father and John laugh. Then Betsy said: "Look! I saved your berries for you, Pat!"

Father was so glad to see his little Betsy-girl safe and sound that he swung her up on his shoulder and carried her home that way. From this high seat she told them all about that greedy little baby bear and how funny and fat he was. Father said she was a plucky girl. Pat thought Betsy was very brave too. He wished he had known it was only a baby bear. He might have stopped to ask him a few questions!



26. HARVESTING

ONE night when the late summer breeze came sighing softly through the fields of yellow grain, father said it was time harvesting began. He was very proud of his fine crops, but he said he wouldn't be really happy till he had them safely harvested.

Early next morning, he sharpened the sickles on the old grindstone. These sickles were big sharp knives, shaped like a half-moon. Father and the boys used them to cut the grain.

Harry and John were a long time at their breakfast that morning, for they said they had to stock up for their big day. Harvesting in the old way was very hard work.

Father divided the big field in half and gave one side to Harry and the other to John. He himself would look after the cornfield.

Harry rubbed his hands together, grabbed his sickle, waved it proudly in the air and said: "I'll race you, John! First finished goes riding over to Hawkins' fulling party, eh, Johnnie boy?"

John laughed in his good-natured way and said: "All right, strong man! Do your hardest."

Then the cutting began. "Swish!" went the shining sickle through a handful of straw. Swish! again and again till there was a trail of fallen grain, like shining gold in the sunlight.

Dora and Mary came along then with wooden rakes.

They raked the handfuls of grain into good-sized bundles and bound them together. Pat and Betsy followed after the girls, gathering up the bundles and setting them up to dry in the sun. Betsy and Pat were called the "stookers" because they set the bundles or sheaves up in stooks.

They worked for what seemed to be a very long time. The sun rose higher and higher. The air grew warm and close. Betsy and Pat grew hot, dusty and sticky, but they kept on.

The bees droned noisily above them. The sun rays danced around them. Their little backs became very tired with all that bending. And yet they kept on.

But at last Betsy cried out, "Oh, I'm so hot! I'm so awfully hot! I'm just boiling!"

"So am I," said Pat. "I can feel the blood pumping through me."

Just then mother came out with a big jug and cup in her hand. "Poor dears!" she said; "are they working you too hard?"

"Oh no, mother! We like helping," they cried together. And it was funny but all of a sudden they did seem to like helping.

"Have a cool drink," said mother, as she poured out a cup of chilled milk. From her pocket she drew out a crispy brown doughnut for each of them. Betsy and Pat thanked her and sat down to enjoy themselves.

After that little lunch, they felt much better and began to work as hard as little ants. My, how they worked piling up the yellow stooks to dry in the sun! They soon began to feel quite proud of their work.

Harry was working very hard, too. He was away up the field, far ahead of John. He laughed and called back:

"Hurry up, you old tortoise!" But John made no answer. Pat said: "Harry can't know the end of that story. It was the tortoise that won the race, wasn't it?"

"Yes," said Betsy, "but I'd sooner be a hare, like the brown one we saw on the trail. You see, I wouldn't be a sleepy one, I'd just leap and leap till I won the race. Then I'd rest!"

"You would get too tired that way," said Pat. "But, O Betsy, look at Harry! What's the matter with him? Look at him!"

Both children shaded their eyes and peered up the field. Why, Harry had dropped his sickle and was galloping about the field as if he had gone crazy! He was shouting something, too, and waving his arms in the air.

They saw John rushing up to him and then they were amazed to see that he burst into laughter!

But when they found out what had happened, they had to laugh too. Harry had been smartly hurrying along, not looking very closely where he was going. The ground was rough, over roots and bumps and stumps half hidden by the waving grain, but he had been getting along well, just the same, till his sickle struck a rotten stump that was hidden in the stalks. In that stump was a hive of wild bees! Zzzz! what a fuss they made! No wonder poor Harry jumped and yelped like mad! He had no less than five stings on his face and one especially nasty one right on his poor nose. It must have been a cruel bee that did that horrid trick. Poor Harry's nose became all red and puffy. It looked so funny that they all had to laugh at him, though they really felt very sorry for him. That's the worst of bee stings!

As you have guessed, the slow John won the race.

He was through first, and so he was the one to go a-visiting to the Hawkins'. However, I'm sure Harry wouldn't have gone if he had won, for he would never want the pretty Hawkins girls to see him with such a dreadful swollen nose!

After the grain had all been cut, dried and taken in, father began the threshing. He threshed the grain to separate the seed from the chaff and straw. This is how he did it. He spread all the sheaves of grain over skins on the barn floor. Then he beat the sheaves with a big wooden lash called a flail. Harry and John helped him.

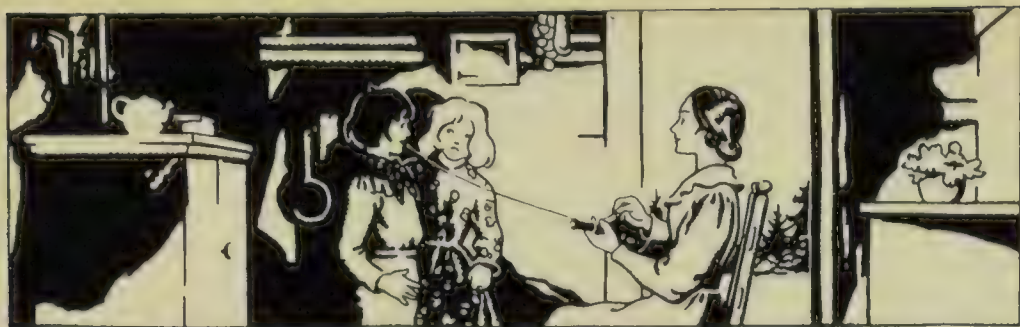
After much hard work and long hours of beating, the grain would be free from the stalks and chaff. Then the threshing was done.

The grain was then gathered up into sacks and taken to town to the miller's. Here it was crushed and ground into meal and flour. Father paid the miller for his work by giving him butter cheese or just by letting him keep some of the flour and meal for himself.

The dried husks and straw that were left after the grain had been taken away were gathered up and saved for many uses. Some were used as bedding for the animals during the long cold winter. The softer parts were often used to stuff the big mattresses that covered the hard wooden beds.

The family were all very glad and happy when the harvesting was over. It was good to know that they had plenty of food to last through the long winter.

Betsy and Pat were glad too. They enjoyed mother's crusty bread and crisp doughnuts all the more when they knew that they themselves had helped with the harvesting. Even the smallest children earned their board in pioneer days!



27. PAT GETS HIS TOOTH PULLED

PAT had a most dreadful toothache. It bothered him night and day. No matter what he did there was always that wicked tooth going "Twang! twang! twang!" shooting pain through him till he didn't know what to do.

Betsy felt so sorry for poor Pat. Pat showed her the bad tooth. It was on his lower jaw, third in from the right. Betsy looked at it very carefully, then she said: "Well, Pat, it looks just like the rest, as far as I can see. I don't see what it's making all the fuss for. It looks perfectly healthy!"

"Ow!" sobbed poor Pat. "It hurts me so!"

"Oh, it should be ashamed of itself to make you feel so badly. Come and show it to mother!"

Betsy took Pat in hand and led him to mother. She was busy plaiting straw for a summer hat, but she stopped her work at once when she saw what was coming. "What's the matter with our Patrick?" she said.

"Oh," said Betsy, "poor Pat has such a bad toothache. That's the one, down there. Show it to mother, Pat."

Pat stopped his low "ow" to open his mouth. Betsy stuck her forefinger out and showed the bad tooth to mother. Mother said "Hm..." in a rather knowing way. Then she said: "Does it hurt you much, Pat?"

Pat nodded his head and tried to keep back the tears.

Betsy chattered on, "Poor Pat, he 's feeling so badly. I'm glad my teeth are all behaving. What shall we do for him, mother?"

Mother said she knew a good way of fixing these teeth that wouldn't behave. She put her finger on the tooth and saw that it was quite loose. She then went over to her work-basket and got out a piece of strong linen thread.

Betsy and Pat watched her with wide eyes. Pat forgot his "ows" and Betsy forgot her chattering. For mother fastened one end of the thread around Pat's tooth. Yes, she knotted one end of the thread right around his bad tooth. Then she went out to the shed to get something.

Betsy whispered: "Be brave, Pat! It won't hurt you very much. I'll give you half my maple sugar ball if you don't cry!"

But poor Pat didn't feel like maple sugar. All he could do was to stare at that piece of dangling linen thread and wonder what was going to happen. Oh dear, what was going to happen?

Mother was back now with a queer green bottle in her hand. It was such a funny bottle! It had a long neck and such a strange round body. The children both stared and stared.

"Now, Pat," said mother, "this bottle is going to fix that bad tooth of yours. It knows all about bad teeth." As mother was talking, she fastened the other end of the thread around the neck of the queer green bottle.

"Now," she said, "I'm going to count one, two,

three! When I say 'three!' I'm going to do the magic. You'll be surprised to see your bad tooth running after my green bottle, just as the dish ran after the spoon! Ready!"

Pat nodded. Betsy craned her neck forward, so that she wouldn't miss any of the magic.

"One, two, three!" said mother.

When she said, "Three!" the bottle dropped suddenly down to the floor. And the next thing that Pat saw was his bad tooth lying there too, at the other end of the thread!

"Oh!" cried Betsy, "your tooth jumped out after the bottle!"

Pat blinked his eyes wide. Yes, that was his tooth lying there all right. The ache was all gone. "Oh, thank you, mother!" he said. "I'm so glad it's out!"

He thought for a few minutes and then he said, with eyes twinkling: "I know! When you dropped the bottle, it was so heavy that it pulled my loose tooth out after it! Isn't that what happened?"

Mother laughed as she took her queer green bottle away. "You'd better ask the bottle itself. The bottle did it. It knows all about bad loose teeth."

Pat smiled. He knew too. Yes, he knew just how it happened. Then he explained it to Betsy, who was still sitting with her neck craned forward and her mouth half open, thinking about the magic tooth bottle!



28. CANDLE-MAKING

"HARRY," said mother, as the family were finishing their breakfast one morning, "I want you to bring up my candle rods from the shed. It is time I made a new supply."

Betsy and Pat looked at each other with joy in their eyes. Was there anything so wonderful as watching candle-making, watching the little wicks of cotton grow to smooth plump candles? Perhaps mother might even let them make a little candle of their own! What fun that would be!

They at once began to see what busy, helpful children they could be. Pat brought in a huge supply of wood, armful after armful, and piled it neatly by the fireside. Betsy fed the chickens and geese, took down water to them, and then helped Dora to make the beds. Mother, Dora and Mary were all hurrying that morning to get the candle-making started, so Betsy hurried too. Mother had now hung the old black pot over the fire, and Pat began to fill it up with pails of water.

While the water was heating, mother carried in the tallow that had been saved for making the candles.

Tallow is the hard white fat of the sheep, just as lard is the fat of pigs. When the water in the old black pot was boiling and curls of steam were twisting up the big chimney, mother put the tallow in the pot. There was twice as much water as tallow.

At first, the tallow floated on top of the water in big lumps. Then it began to melt and soon the top of the water was covered with a thick, clear-looking oil.

Mary then helped mother lift the pot off the hook and on to the kitchen floor. A chair was placed on each side of the pot and two long sticks were stretched across the backs of the chairs.

Harry had brought in the candle rods, smooth thin sticks about two feet long, and Betsy and Pat were ready to hand them to mother. Beside on the corner of the table were a great many pieces of cotton wick, just as long as mother wanted the candles to be.

"That wick inside the candles is just like the core inside an apple, isn't it?" asked Betsy.

"Yes, dear," said mother, with a little smile.

Pat gave Betsy a poke as he whispered: "Don't bother mother with your old questions when she's so busy!"

But Betsy started to hand mother the candle rods, just as if she hadn't heard him.

Mother took the candle rods as they passed them to her and looped a strip of wick over them. She put six loops of wick over each rod, all the same distance apart.

"Those rods with the six wicks hanging down look like branches of the alder tree when they have the long catkins hanging down," said Betsy.

And again, busy as she was, mother had to smile. It seemed as if Betsy simply could not keep still.

After each rod had its six loops of wick hanging from it, mother placed the rod across the two poles. Soon there was a long line of rods looped with wick stretched across the two poles.

Betsy was now busy counting the number of rods. "There are sixty-one rods!" she said, proudly. "And there are six candle wicks on each rod. What is six times sixty-one, Pat? You know all about counting."

"That's not counting," said Pat. "That's multiplying. Anyway, mother said there would be enough to use one candle for each day in the year, so there must be about three hundred and sixty-five."

"Oh yes," said Betsy, as if she had known all about it. "Well, that's a nice big number. And perhaps if you and I can make one, it will make three hundred and sixty-seven."

"We won't be able to make any if you don't stop your chattering," warned Pat.

So Betsy was quiet for a while and both children watched their mother with wide eyes, for she had begun the dipping.

She began at one end of the line, and lifted the first rod with its six wicks off the poles. She held on to the rod and dipped the six wicks down into the pot of hot tallow below. She took them quickly out again and put the rod back on its place across the poles. Then she dipped the next rod of wicks in, and so on down the line. The grease soon began to harden on the wicks and they stood stiffly like hard little ropes.

"That tallow grease hardens almost as quickly as bacon grease when the pan gets cold," said Betsy. "But I'm sure it won't taste half so good!"

Pat gave her a little dig in the back that reminded

her of her mistake. So she was quiet again for a little while.

Mother had now finished dipping the last rod in that long row and then she began over again. Down the long line she went dipping all the wicks in a second time, and then a third time, and after that a fourth time. By now the wicks were beginning to look like very thin candles. They were nice smooth candles and mother was pleased with them.

Just before she started giving those candles their sixth coat of grease, she said: "There are two little ends of wick on the table, children. You can dip them in, if you are very careful."

"Oh, thank you!" cried the children, as they picked up the pieces of wick. Pat got two little sticks, just like mother's candle rods, and they looped their wick over them. Then they dipped in, just as mother did, and pulled out quickly to harden. Then in again and out, in again and out, till theirs too began to thicken and grow quite like candles.

However, the tiresome part was waiting for the grease to harden. Having only one candle each, all they could do was to hold the candle till it hardened and thickened. Betsy found that waiting very tiresome, till she got a bright idea.

"When you blow on soup it cools it," she said. "So I'm going to turn around in circles to make a wind to cool my candle and make it harden quickly!"

After the next dipping, she rushed outside with her candle. There she turned around and around, holding her stick out at arm's length. She spun around till she got quite dizzy. Then she stopped to see how her candle was getting along.

And what a surprise she got! Can you guess what had happened? Why, her fine idea of turning around had made most of the grease thicken in a blob at the end of the wick! No straight smooth candle was Betsy's. Such a funny bumpy fellow!

Poor Betsy! She felt very badly about it, and especially when she saw Pat's smooth little candle.

"It's just like the story of the hare and the tortoise, Betsy," said Pat. "Sure and steady makes the best candles, eh, mother?"

Mother finished dipping the last rod of candles. She put it back on its place at the end of that long line. She stretched her tired back and pushed the loose hair back from her hot forehead. But she had to smile happily when she saw the long row of smooth creamy candles.

"Yes, Betsy, you must be careful and steady in making candles. There is no short cut in the hard work of candle-making!"

And Betsy nodded her head sadly. She had found that out!



29. THE CORN ROAST

BETSY sometimes thought that she loved the fall best of all the year. Everything was so golden and red and beautiful then. And everybody seemed to be so happy. Yes, the fall seemed to be the time of happiness and beauty.

In those lazy fall days, she would often wander down to the pumpkin patch by herself. The sun cast slanting golden lights over that corner and Betsy loved to stare and stare at those great orange pumpkins. She used to pretend that she was Cinderella down picking out the pumpkin for her coach. She would take that big fellow over beside the fence. It would make a wonderful golden coach, and there were lots of mice in the barn and . . . But somebody always called here, just at the most interesting part. So Cinderella-of-the-Fairytale would become Betsy-of-the-Farm again as she raced off to answer that call.

A lovely tang of smoke hung over the farm these early fall days. For father was busy smoking the fish that the boys had caught. He cleaned and cut the fish into long pieces and hung these pieces from the roof of the little smoke-house. Betsy and Pat did not have to carry up big armfuls of wood for this fire. Why, the little fire in the smoke-house asked for just damp

leaves and little bits of bark! It was very easily satisfied, not at all like the other greedy fires.

Father also smoked meat in his smoke-house. Some of the meat was cut in small pieces and dried, and then sealed in skin bags with fat, the way the Indians did. The rest of the fresh meat was usually smoked and preserved for winter use that way. So that was why the farm was spicy with blue smoke these fall days. Betsy and Pat loved the smell of that smoke. Betsy was sure there was happiness magic in it.

Mother and the girls were busy these days with the apple drying. They peeled the hard juicy apples and cut them in quarters. Then at night, when the family were seated around the fire, mother had them all at work stringing the quarters of apples on linen thread. She then hung these strings of apples near the fireplace to dry. These dried apples made many a tasty apple pie and turnover during the dull winter days.

After all the crops of potatoes, corn and grain, pumpkins, turnips and apples had been safely stored away, then came the time for merry-making. Jolly parties were held at all the farms, up and down the road. But of all the fun, Betsy and Pat loved the corn roast best of all.

The corn roast usually took place some crisp starry night when the moon rode high in the sky. A cleared place down by the lake shore was usually chosen for the fire. Then big piles of wood were stacked up ready, and smooth logs were rolled together around the fire for seats. Just at dusk, when the shadows of night began to creep about, the fire was lit and then came all the big boys and girls ready for the fun.

There was always much talking and laughing and

moving around before they all were settled. It seemed as if some of the pretty girls just couldn't decide whom to sit beside. Betsy and Pat sat together down at one end of a log and watched everything with round eyes.

After they were all settled, the big ears of creamy corn were laid on the red hot coals to roast. The corn grew hot, the green ends sizzled, and then the plump kernels seemed just about bursting with golden goodness. Then it was ready to eat. Mary had brought down big pats of yellow butter and salt and pepper. Mm . . . ! how good that hot roast corn tasted just dripping with butter! No wonder they were all so happy and noisy!

They also had crisp red apples to munch and good pieces of sweet maple sugar to suck. By this time, all the big boys and girls were singing loudly together and having a great time. Sometimes they didn't all sing the same song and sometimes they didn't even keep together, but they enjoyed themselves just the same.

The big golden moon sailed high above them and shone with silver light over all the world. The lake water rippled blue and shining under the moonlight. The trees stood out black and leafy. Tiny rosy sparks from the fire twisted up and upwards, to lose themselves in the blue swirls of smoke. Betsy and Pat thought it was a very wonderful night.

Now they were telling stories. Harry had started a story and the girl next to him, the pretty Hawkins girl with the red hair, had gone on with it. Each person added something to the story till it became a very wild and spooky tale. By that time, they decided it was time to go inside.

All the furniture had been cleared out of the main room, leaving it ready for dancing. A big cheery fire was blazing up the chimney and four yellow candles were burning on each side. Sprays of red autumn leaves were hung along the walls, so that the room looked very exciting and party-like.

Old Tom the fiddler had arrived for the dancing. He was sitting in a cosy corner, tuning up his fiddle. "Squeak, squeak, squeak!" it went, as he tuned it. Betsy and Pat watched him, open-mouthed. It seemed as if that fiddle didn't want to be tuned at all!

"Ready, folks!" he called out. "Pick your partners! Ready for the grand march!" He then swung into a lively tune and all the boys and girls went up in pairs and started to dance around the room. They all wore fancy-beaded moccasins for dancing, and they made a pretty sight. Betsy and Pat were glad to see that Harry and John had pretty girls for their partners and that they were having a good time.

"Our big brothers dance well, don't they?" said Betsy proudly, as she watched them swing their partners around and around.

"Well, they ought to," said Pat. "I saw them practising their dancing down in the barn all morning. Perhaps some of the other fellows didn't have time to practise."

Betsy didn't say anything to that. She still thought her big brothers were very fine dancers. Mary and Dora were good dancers, but girls always could dance well. She hoped she would be a graceful dancer, too, when she grew up.

After a while, they all sat down along the wall to rest. They sang a little and laughed a great deal.

Then mother and the girls served big cups of hot coffee with gingerbread, doughnuts, and wedges of apple pie. After that, they started dancing all over again, enjoying themselves more than ever.

Then a big boy with rumpled yellow hair played the fiddle while Old Tom had a little rest. Old Tom rested for a few minutes and then, just guess what he did? Why, he came up to Betsy, where she sat snugly beside Pat, and with a low bow, said: "May I have the pleasure of this dance, Miss Betsy?"

Betsy didn't know what to do! Her cheeks grew very rosy as she looked around wildly, trying to think of something to say. She wanted to dance, of course, and yet she didn't know whether she should. However, Pat kept digging his elbow in her ribs till she at last stumbled up, with a shy little smile. Old Tom swung across the floor with pretty Miss Betsy for his partner!

When she came back, all flushed and happy, she whispered to Pat, "How did I do?" And Pat answered, gravely, "Very well. You must grow about three times bigger and you'll be just right."

Betsy gave a big sigh. Three times bigger! And it had taken her seven whole years to grow as big as she was! Oh dear!

However, she soon forgot her sadness in watching the party again. That party kept up till late in the night. Betsy and Pat fell fast asleep in their cosy corner and had to be carried off to bed. So that was the end of the corn roast for them!



30. WILD GEESE

"It's time for the wild geese to come by," said father, one crisp frosty fall night. "There's a feeling of winter in the air and nobody knows better than the geese when winter's due. Keep a sharp eye for the geese, children."

Betsy and Pat had been sitting down on the step of the workshed, waiting for father to finish fitting the new handle into the axe. He had been making that handle for two nights now, smoothing it out of the rough wood. Now he hammered it tightly into the axe-head, making the axe look like new. Betsy and Pat had been watching him with interest, but at the mention of wild geese a new light came into their eyes.

They looked up into the darkening sky above. No, not a sign of the flying wedge of honking geese yet. Just three pale yellow stars beginning to twinkle brightly and a thin little moon hiding behind a baby cloud. The wind came sighing up from the lake, blowing a few red leaves before it. The dry grasses down by the lake edge rustled and crackled. That was where the geese always rested for the night. They loved to rest on the water among the reeds, and gossip happily after their day's flying. That was where father and Harry spread the nets to catch those wild geese.

"It doesn't seem very fair to catch those poor geese

when they are sleepy and tired at bedtime," said Betsy, softly. "It seems to me to be unkind."

But Pat wouldn't stand for that. "Why, Betsy, you are forgetting. You're forgetting that we don't kill those wild geese and eat them. Why, we just clip their wings and tame them and then they can live happily with our own white geese."

"They never look very happy," said Betsy. "They always flap their clipped stubs of wings and look up at the sky, as if they want to fly up, away again."

"It isn't just geese that do that," said Pat. "Why, I'm always wishing to flap my arms and fly up into the sky too, or go flying in a sky boat."

But Betsy wouldn't agree with him. "The white geese don't act like that," she said. "They just waddle around on the ground, quite happy all day long."

Just then, father came out of the shed, with his just-like-new axe in his hand. He was whistling happily, so Pat asked him about the wild geese. "Father," he said, "aren't the wild geese happy when we catch them and tame them? Betsy thinks they are sad and always wanting to get away."

Father looked at them sitting there together on the doorstep. He smiled and then he sat down too, right between them on the doorstep. He felt very big and warm and strong to the children as they cuddled up close to him. There was such a nice smell of wood shavings to his rough woolly coat.

Father looked up at the deep blue sky, now sprinkled and sparkling with many wee stars. He listened to the wind come sighing up from the lake edge, and then he said: "Well now, Pat, wild geese were a fine food for the Indians and a fine food for many a hungry

settler, so what I say is that any goose that escapes the roasting-pot is lucky. Yes, any wild goose that is caught, kept alive and fed with the tame geese all winter is lucky. Are they happy? Well, I'll just tell you a little story about a wild goose we tamed one year.

"We caught him with three others, just about this time, in a net down on the grasses. He was a fine strong fellow, with a grey suit, white collar, and black cap. He made a big fuss about being caught and even tried to bite us when we clipped his wings. No, Betsy love, clipping their wings doesn't hurt the least bit. It's just like cutting your hair or finger nails.

"We put him in with the white geese, hoping he would make friends with them. At first, he sulked by himself and refused to eat, till he spotted a plump little white goose. We always called her Becky; it seemed to suit her, the plump happy thing that she was. After he met Becky, his manner changed.

"He soon became the leader of that flock of geese with Becky as his proud wife. There were four other wild geese besides the six white ones in that pen, and he became the leader of the lot. So we called him Augustus. That was Mary's name for him.

"Augustus and Becky lived happily together the whole winter through. Even when the first sign of spring came and the other wild geese became a little bit restless, Augustus was still happy with Becky. I guess he was a sensible fellow, that Augustus, and he knew a good home. However, two of the other wild geese were not so wise. When the first flock of honking geese flew over the farm on their way north, these two decided to fly off and join them.

"They couldn't fly, of course, for their wings were still clipped, so they started off on foot! Yes, sir, they started off on foot after the flying geese. That just shows how much sense they had.

"But, they had forgotten their leader Augustus. He wasn't going to have any geese belonging to his flock running away like that. He set right off after those two runaways, and you can imagine how surprised and delighted we were to see Augustus arrive proudly home with a rather beaten-looking grey gander on each side of him!

"Augustus lived to a fine old age, and he and Becky raised many a fine family between them. He loved the farm life so much that he taught all his flock to settle down and enjoy themselves. So, after knowing Augustus, I say that a wild gander can settle down to quite a happy life on the farm with tame geese.

"But I see a dozen stars shining, don't I? Bedtime for all little boys and girls, those twelve shining stars are saying. So, off with you, and dream of happy Augustus if you want to!"



31. A TALE OF THE MOUNTAINS

ONE night as the family sat around the big blazing fire while the winds outside howled around the corners of the cabin, Betsy and Pat curled up close to father and said: "Please tell us the Tale of the Mountains, father. Please!"

Father looked at them, with their wide shining eyes, so eager for the story. He saw that the rest of the family were all busy with their own affairs. It seemed as if they all had something to do except Pat and Betsy. So he stretched out his legs, put an arm around each of them, and began.

"Well, as I've told you many times before, away over to the west, high in the mountains, lived a wild mountain goat. He was a lordly beautiful fellow with sharp pointed horns, and for years he roamed happily over the mountain tops, king-of-the-castle, as you would say. However, one day, when the winds blew chilly from the north, he said to himself, 'Baa! baa! It is now high time I gave up my roving ways and settled down in a snug little home of my own. I shall build myself a house!'

"He soon found just the right place for his house, and he began to clear the ground. He worked hard all day, and at night he went back to the old sleeping place in a cranny high in the mountain tops.

"But in those same mountains lived a wild mountain cat that also felt that cruel north wind pinching her nose. No self-respecting wild cat will stand for her precious nose to be pinched by a rude chilly wind. She saw that it was quite time she built herself a cosy wee house of her own. So that very night she prowled about, looking for a good place to build. At last she found a fine sheltered spot.

"There was something else very delightful about this spot she chose. The ground seemed to have been partly cleared. 'Mm...! what luck!' she purred. 'The worst part of the clearing is over. Now, I'll just set to work and finish the job.'

"She worked hard all night long. By the time the sun was peeping behind the great shoulders of the purple mountains she had finished the clearing. Then she went back to her old sleeping place among the trees, for a wild cat likes to sleep in the daytime and do all her private business at night. That's the way of the cat family.

"Just as the sun was starting to climb up, up in the blue sky above the mountains, the wild goat came back, all ready to finish his clearing. Imagine his surprise when he found the ground all cleared! 'Baaa!' he said, with great pleasure. 'What luck indeed! Some kind soul has finished the job for me. Now for the framework!'

"So he next began to erect the framework of his house. He worked hard all day and when the blue

shadows of night came stealing down from the mountain tops, he had it all finished. Then he went back to his mountain cranny for his well-earned rest.

"The mists and hush of night fell over the mountains and back came the wild cat to work on his house. 'Mm . . . !' she purred. 'Some kind soul has been helping me and has erected the framework. What luck indeed! Now I shall put on the walls!'

"So she worked hard all through the blue misty night. If she hadn't been working so hard, she would have seen the little silver stars, away above, laughing down on her. It looked as if they knew a very good joke. But all that the wild cat could think of was to get her cosy house finished before the glaring sun arose. In spite of all her hard work, she did not manage to get the roof on. At dawn she crept back to her tree-home again, thinking happily that just one more night's work would finish her house.

"At sunrise again came the mountain goat, ready to begin the walls of his house. Imagine his astonishment when he saw the four walls all made and a door and small window as well! He thought he must be dreaming. He shook his lordly grey head, tossing his sharp hooked horns, and then looked again. They were still there; real as life!

"'Baa! baa-aa!' he cried in pleasure. 'Some kind soul has again helped me and put the walls up. What luck indeed!'

"So he set to work on the roof, humming happily to himself through his little grey beard. He gathered strips of bark for the roof. He worked very hard laying them on, just so. At sunset, he was delighted to find his snug little house all finished. 'At last my

work is done!' he cried, happily. 'Now let the winds blow their worst! To-night I sleep in my own little house!'

"So he made a bed of soft dried grass in one corner and was soon fast asleep after all his hard work.

"Again the shadows of night crept about, and with them crept the wild cat back to her work. When she saw the house all finished, she thought she must be dreaming. She shook her sleek head as if to drive the dreams away and rubbed her right eye with her strong padded paw. No, there it still was, all finished!

"Mm . . . !" she purred in a very, very satisfied way. 'That kind soul must have finished my roof for me. What luck indeed, for the roof is the part of the house-building that I detest. Whee! Now my house is finished. I can begin to live in it.'

"So she padded softly inside and there on a bed of soft grasses lay a big mountain goat, fast asleep!

"Sspp!" hissed the wild cat, in a rage. 'What do you mean by sleeping in my house?'

"The mountain goat leaped to his feet and lowered his great hooked horns in a rather terrifying way. 'This is not your house! It is my house. I built it myself. Get out!' and he stamped the ground in his anger.

"Your house indeed? The very idea! This is my house. I built it myself and I'm not going to have any old Billy-goat sleeping in it!'

"Now, if there is one thing a real mountain goat hates more than another, it is to be called a Billy-goat. So he was now properly angry and roared: 'I made this house, cleared the ground, put up the framework, put bark on the roof and all. If you happened to tack

on the walls, I thank you for your kindness, though you probably needed the exercise.'

"'Sppp! Kindness? The very idea! This is my house, made by me for myself, and you are going to get out!'

"Oh, dear! all night long these two sillies quarrelled till they just about wore themselves out. Then, when the poor goat was hoarse with baaing and the cat had hissed till her throat was dry, they decided to share the house and live together. The goat could sleep in it at night and the cat could sleep in it by day.

"Now this sounded like a very fine plan, but the truth is that it didn't work out at all. For, you see, the goat was afraid really to sleep at night for fear that awful wild cat would leap upon him and tear him to shreds. And the wild cat was afraid really to sleep in the daytime for fear that awful Billy-goat would hook her with those fierce sharp horns. As you can imagine, neither of them had much sleep.

"One night when it was the goat's turn to have the house, the cat was prowling outside. At last she decided she would peek in the window and just see what that old Billy-goat did at nights. Now the goat was restless and was tossing about from side to side on his bed of grass. Just as that cat's sly head came peering over the window ledge, the goat turned again and his big sharp horns scraped against the wall below the window with a great noise.

"That noise terrified the cat and with a loud angry snarl she leaped down and bounded off into the forest. The goat was after her at last with those terrible fierce horns!

"But when the goat heard that loud angry snarl, his

hair just about turned white with fright. He jumped to his feet and raced out through the door and off into the woods in the other direction. The cat was after him at last with those terrible fierce claws!

“All night long, those two sillies kept on running and running in opposite ways. And the little silver stars, who see everything, declare they’re running still! What do you think of that?”

Betsy and Pat gave big happy sighs when father finished the story. They always loved that story of the foolish mountain goat and cat.



32. THE END

BECAUSE endings are usually rather sad, we are going to make this one very short and hurry over it.

We are now going to leave Betsy and Pat, the children of the pioneers, sitting snug and cosy beside their big cheery fire. The winds outside are howling that winter is coming with its ice and snow and long dull days, but Betsy and Pat won't mind as long as there is a big fire blazing in the fireplace and plenty of food in the cupboards. So let us call, "Good-bye, good-bye!" to our little pioneer friends and leave them snug and cosy around their big fire.

Good-bye!

